MONDAY
December 5, 2022

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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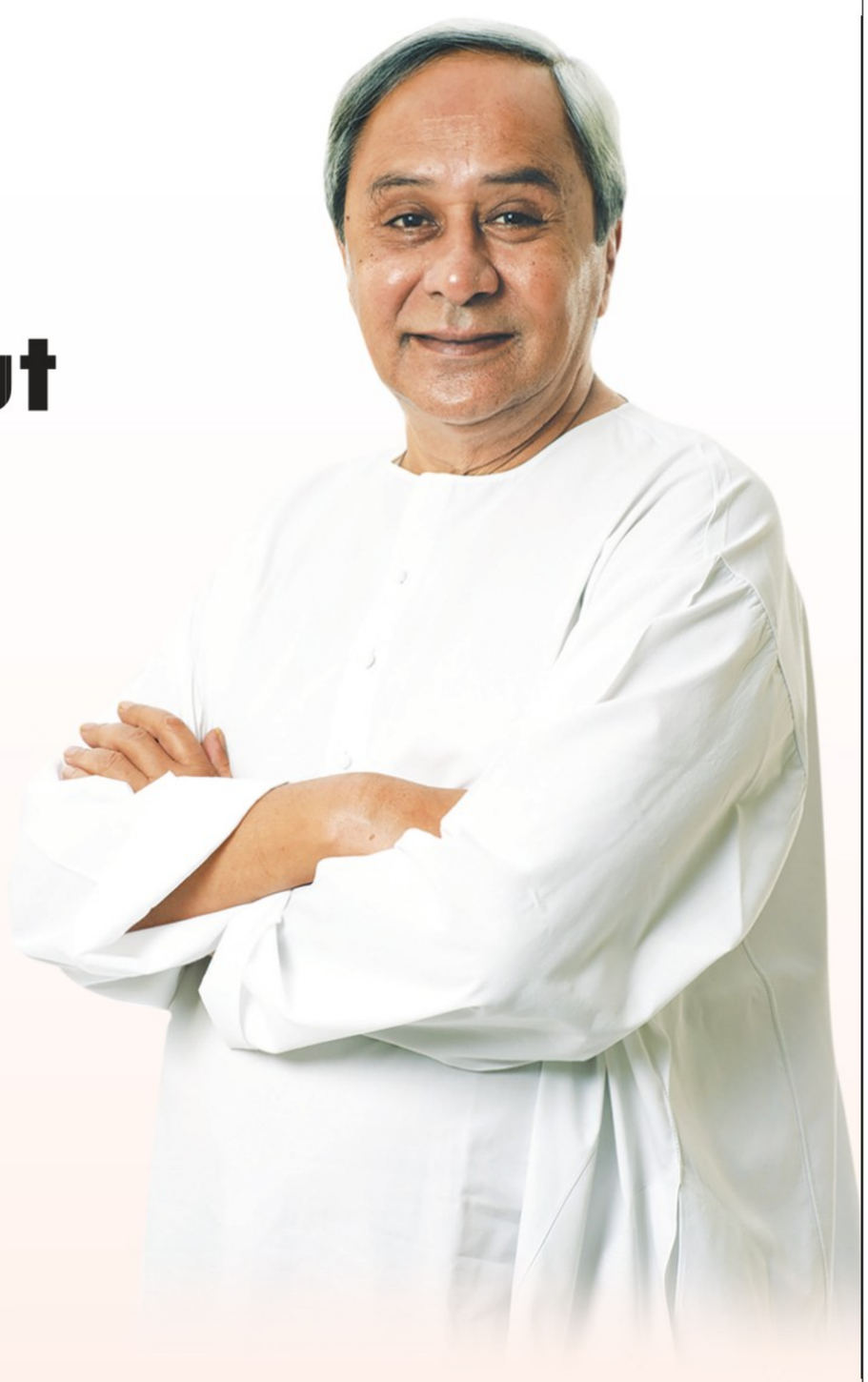

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Last-wicket pair steers Bangladesh home
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In rare gesture, Iran shuts morality police

The move comes after over two months of protests over the death in custody of a young woman arrested in Tehran for not wearing the hijab

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Long battle: Protests against the morality police have swept across Iran since September, after the death of Mahsa Amini in custody. AFP

Iran has scrapped its morality police after more than two months of protests triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini following her arrest for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code for women, local media said on Sunday.

Women-led protests, labelled "riots" by the authorities, have swept Iran since the 22-year-old Iranian of Kurdish origin died on September 16, three days after her arrest by the morality police in Tehran.

Demonstrators have burned their mandatory hijab head coverings and shouted anti-government slogans, and a growing number of women have failed to wear the hijab, particularly in several parts of Tehran. "Morality police have nothing to do with the judiciary and have been abolished," Attorney-General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency.

The announcement of the units' abolition came a day after Mr. Montazeri said "both parliament and the judiciary are working" on the issue of whether the law requiring women to cover their heads needs to be changed.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Congress decides to elect new CWC at February plenary meet in Raipur

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge being felicitated during the party's Steering Committee meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

At the first meeting of the Congress Steering Committee on Sunday, the newly elected party president, Mallikarjun Kharge, said those party office-bearers unable to meet their responsibilities should quit.

The Steering Committee, a transitional body working in place of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), unanimously resolved that the 85th Plenary Session of the party would be held in Raipur in the second half of February 2023. The new CWC will be elected according to the party's constitution during the plenary.

Underlining the importance of "organisational accountability from top to bottom", Mr. Kharge, in his opening statement at the meeting, said, "There are many responsible people in the party who fulfil their duties. But, at the same time, a few of our colleagues believe that their deficiencies in fulfilling the responsibility will be ignored. This is not acceptable. Those who are unable to fulfil the responsibility will have to give a chance to others."

He stressed that winning electoral battles was essential for the party to serve the country, and this, in turn, could only be achieved by a strong organisation that delivered on people's expectations.

He exhorted the party general secretaries and leaders in charge of the State units to introspect. "Ask yourself, do you spend at least 10 days each month in the State under your charge," Mr. Kharge said, prescribing a host of housekeeping solutions to keep the organisation alert. Each State unit must take stock of the bodies at the district and block levels, ensuring that they were reconstituted every five years and new faces were given organisational responsibilities, he added.

Sounding out the States that would face the Assembly elections before 2024, Mr. Kharge said they should have an "activity schedule in place".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Cong. announces follow-up drive to Rahul's yatra

As the Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Rahul Gandhi, is set to conclude on Republic Day 2023, the Congress intends to immediately follow it up with a two-month countrywide intensive public engagement programme, 'Haath-se-Haath Jodo', the party announced on Sunday. » PAGE 9

NEARBY

KSRTC to run AC electric buses

BENGALURU
In a first, the KSRTC will operate electric buses on inter-city routes. Under the FAME scheme, the corporation is all set to operate 50 such buses. » Page 2

Rowdy-sheeters seek political role

BENGALURU
The BJP has been drawing flak over rowdy-sheeters being seen with its leaders or even joining the party over the last two weeks. Many such people, claiming to have 'turned a new leaf', are lobbying to secure the poll ticket across party lines. » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

German Minister arrives today, changes stance on 'UN role in Kashmir dispute'

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Germany understands the "economic constraints" of partners such as India, said German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock, referring to India's decision to continue imports of Russian oil despite western sanctions and an "oil price cap" by the G-7 and European Union (EU) that goes into effect on Monday.

Meanwhile, in a reversal from her own comments two months ago on a role for the United Nations in resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, which had led to sharp criticism from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ms. Baerbock said that she believes this was a "bilateral" dispute between the two countries.

Ms. Baerbock, who lands in Delhi on Monday for a two-day visit, told *The Hindu* that she hopes India will help the western sanctions effort against Russia and adhere to the price cap set at $60 per barrel for Russian seaborne exports.

Since the war in Ukraine began, Russia has become India's largest oil supplier, with a 20-fold increase in imports in the past 10 months.

The issue is likely to be on the agenda during her talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday, her first visit since German Chancellor Olaf Scholz appointed Ms. Baerbock last December.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Phase 2 polls for 93 seats in Gujarat today

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

In the second phase of the Gujarat Assembly election, voting will be conducted for 93 seats in 14 districts, including Ahmedabad and Vadodara, across the north and central regions on Monday.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 9

Drones to deliver drugs to Meghalaya's farthest reaches

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Taking medicines to the primary health centre at Pedaldoba in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya is an uphill task. So it is to five of its remote sub-centres.

The scene is expected to change on Monday when the centre receives a consignment of medicines, vaccines and other healthcare necessities delivered by a customised drone, Vertiplane X3, from what is believed to be India's first drone station designed for medical supplies.

The drone station has been built at the sub-divisional hospital in Jengjal, about 69 km from Pedaldoba and 32 km from Tura, the district headquarters and the largest town of Meghalaya's western half.

"The Meghalaya government decided to capitalise on the liberalised Drone Rules, 2021 announced by the Civil Aviation Ministry to usher in a new era of transportation. We focused on the public health logistics because of the difficult terrain and the challenging road network in our State," Health Minister James P.K. Sangma said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

11-year-old electrocuted three days ago succumbs to burns

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

One of the two injured boys admitted to Victoria Hospital following electrocution, succumbed in the early hours of Sunday.

The deceased, Supreeth, 11, had suffered over 75% burns.

The other injured boy, Chandan, 13, has suffered nearly 90% burns and his chances of survival are also very slim, hospital sources said.

The two boys, students of Government Primary School at Nandini Layout, were trying to catch pigeons which were on a high-tension power line using an iron rod from the terrace of a building on Thursday evening.

The duo sustained severe burns and were admitted to the hospital where Supreeth succumbed. Chandan is being treated in the ICU.

Tornadoes motorcycle display team creates three new world records

Feat on wheels: Havildar Manish creating a record for the longest wheelie, Capt. Abhjeet Singh Grewal creating a record for the longest continuous ride standing on the seat of a motorcycle, and Havildar Harikesh Yadav creating a new record for the longest motorcycle ride while sitting on the tail light. K. MURALI KUMAR AND SUDHAKARA JAIN

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The ASC motorcycle display team, Tornadoes, created three new world records on Sunday.

Captain Abhijeet Singh Grewal created a world record of 114 km in three hours and 29 minutes for the longest continuous ride standing on the seat of a motorcycle and broke the Guinness World Record of 41.8 km held by Hardan al Delaimi, Iraq, and the 75.2 km record held by Army Signals motorcycle Team, Daredevils.

Havildar Harikesh Yadav created a new record of 356 km in 9 hours and 17 minutes for the longest motorcycle ride while sitting on the tail light and broke the earlier record of 111 km held by Army Corps of Signals Team Daredevils. Yet another new record was created by Havildar Manish for the longest wheelie on a Royal Enfield 350 cc covering a distance of 2.4 km.

The attempts were conducted as per the guidelines of the Guinness Book of World Records, Limca Book of Records and International Book of Records. These feats were attempted at the ASC Centre (South) and NICE road, Bengaluru.

With these feats the ASC Tornadoes have increased their tally to 35 world records.

The Tornadoes was raised in 1982 after having given a stupendous display of daredevilry during the 1982 Asian Games. Since then the men of the Tornadoes team by their grit, determination and spirit of adventure have made a niche for themselves by rewriting various records.

The team is stationed at ASC Centre (South), Bengaluru, and has 39 riders of two officers, two Junior Commissioned Officers and 35 other ranks. Tornadoes have performed in numerous display shows in India and abroad.

The new records were attempted to commemorate the 262th ASC Corps Day and 11th ASC Reunion. According to the team, stunt riding on a motorcycle demands guts, personal courage, physical fitness and great skill in handling the motorcycle.

TAC for setting up Centre for Pandemic Preparedness

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

While COVID-19 scare in India is on the wane, the situation in China has given some reason for caution and to be prepared for possible future outbreaks.

Karnataka's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recommended that the State establish a Centre for Pandemic Preparedness (CPP) to help predict and prevent future outbreaks through stringent surveillance. TAC members, who deliberated on this issue at the committee's 185th meeting last week, concurred that the lessons from the previous epidemics and pandemics should be invested in the CPP.

TAC Chairman M.K. Sudarshan told *The Hindu* that the CPP should be able to forecast pandemics, and alert the government about any new pandemic based on surveillance. "The centre should also ensure preparedness for successful response in terms of skilled and adequate manpower, equipment, facilities, and communication, among other aspects. This should be a part of the State's Integrated Disease Surveillance Program," he said.

The TAC's report referred to the 1994 pneumonic plague in India that affected Karnataka too. "Subsequently, pandemics like SARS in 2002 and H1N1 in 2009 affected the State. In 2013, there was a threat of Ebola but did not affect the State. But SARS-CoV-2 pandemic hit the world, country and the State badly in 2020. It continued with much more severity in 2021 and in a milder form in early 2022, and thereafter showing signs of gradual decline," the report stated.

RELATED REPORT
» PAGE 3

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Small increase in capex despite massive revenue increase

2.2 In percentage, the increase in capital expenditure (capex) of 18 States in the first half of the current fiscal even as their combined revenue deficit has narrowed to more than one-fourth from the year-ago period, according to ICRA ratings. Even when revenue deficits have declined by 75%, States have collectively spent only ₹1.59 lakh crore so far this fiscal. PTI

More than half of Jharkhand's forest land unfit for growth

69 The percentage of soil in Jharkhand's forest areas that has turned unfit for plant growth due to acute deficiency of nitrogen, according to the Forest Soil Health Card report. The report was prepared by the institute of Forest Productivity upon the direction of the Ministry of Forest and Environment. The institute collected 16,670 soil samples in 31 forest divisions. PTI

Bio-economy grew rapidly under Modi rule, says Minister

80 In $ billion, the worth of India's bio-economy in 2022, which has grown eight times from $10 billion in 2014 under the Modi Government, according to Union Minister Jitendra Singh. The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office said three biotech startups were incorporated every day in 2021 and 1,128 biotech startups were set up last year alone. PTI

Move to increase reservations ahead of Assembly elections

76 In percentage, the reservation in government jobs and educational institutions, as per the Chhattisgarh government's move to raise reservations ahead of next year's Assembly elections. The Chhattisgarh High Court has already held twice that reservation beyond 50% is impermissible, and that re-promulgating the same policy is an eyewash. PTI

Increase in HIV cases in Assam since April this year, says ASACS

2,269 The number of people who tested positive for HIV in Assam since April this year, which is much higher than in the previous two years, according to Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS). A total of 5,57,747 samples were tested from April to October this year. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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China's moves in the Indian Ocean

How is the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum different from the Indian Ocean Rim Association? Did India attend the event? Why is China deepening its role in the Indian Ocean Region? Did Australia and Maldives participate in the forum?

EXPLAINER

Ananth Krishnan

The story so far:
On November 21, China's top development aid agency convened the first "China-Indian Ocean Region Forum" in the southwestern Chinese city of Kunming. The meet organised by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) is the latest Chinese initiative focusing on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), underlining Beijing's growing strategic interests in a region where its economic footprint has been deepening.

What is the China Indian Ocean Region forum about?
The CIDCA, which is China's new development aid agency, currently headed by former Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui, said in a statement the forum was "the first high-level official development cooperation forum jointly held by China and countries in the Indian Ocean Region" and "over 100 participants, including senior officials from 19 countries bordering the Indian Ocean" attended. The forum issued a "Joint Press Statement" that noted China "proposed to establish a marine disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation mechanism between China and countries in the Indian Ocean region" and "all parties agreed" to "strengthen policy coordination, deepen development cooperation, increase resilience to shocks and disasters, and enhance relevant countries' capacity to obtain economic benefits through use of marine resources such as fisheries, renewable energy, tourism, and shipping in a sustainable way."

Which countries have backed the forum?
The organisers have said the forum was attended by "high-level representatives" and "senior officials" from 19 countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Afghanistan, Iran, Oman, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar, Mauritius, Djibouti, and Australia.

Sphere of influence: The Chinese People's Liberation Army personnel attend the opening ceremony of China's military base in Djibouti on August 1, 2017. AFP

But at least two of those countries, Australia and Maldives, subsequently released statements rebutting the claim, emphasising that they did not participate officially. Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and former Maldives President Mohammed Waheed Hassan were reported to have virtually joined the meeting, and both were attending in their individual capacities. The Maldives Foreign Ministry said that "there was no official representation", stressing that "participation by individuals" did not constitute official representation. Australia's High Commissioner in Delhi, Barry O'Farrell said in a post on Twitter that "no Australian Government official attended the Kunming China-Indian Ocean Forum on Development Cooperation." He noted that Assistant Foreign Minister Tim Watts had attended another forum – the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) council meet – adding pointedly that this was "the only ministerial-level forum for Indian Ocean."

Where does India stand?
Xu Wei, spokesperson for CIDCA, said India as "a major country in the Indian Ocean region, was invited to this forum" and added that China "looks forward to meeting India at the next forum". That prospect appears unlikely. New Delhi has viewed China's recent moves in the region warily, including the recent visit of a Chinese military tracking vessel, the Yuan Wang 5, to Sri Lanka. Moreover, India sees the IORA as an already established platform for the region, which has 23 members, including Australia and Maldives with 10 dialogue partners which include China, Japan, Russia, the U.K. and the U.S.

What are China's plans for the IOR?
The forum has underlined China's stepped-up interest in the IOR, where it is already a major trading partner for most countries and where lie sea routes vital to China's economic interests. The CIDCA forum is the latest initiative to reflect Beijing's view that it has a clear stake in the region, and that more such initiatives are likely. Earlier this year, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during a visit to Sri Lanka, proposed creating a forum "on the development of Indian Ocean island countries" to "build consensus and synergy, and promote common development". He called on Sri Lanka to "play an important role" in this initiative. The stepped-up regional diplomacy comes while China is establishing a more frequent military presence in the waters of the IOR. Beijing's first ever overseas military facility was set up in Djibouti near the Horn of Africa. Chinese military ships, tracking vessels, and submarines have been visiting ports in the region with greater frequency. Chinese military planners have previously said the PLA Navy, which earlier this year launched its third aircraft carrier , has a long-term plan to deploy six aircraft carriers to secure China's maritime interests, and that two of them will be based in the Indian Ocean Region.

THE GIST

- On November 21, China's top development aid agency convened a first "China-Indian Ocean Region Forum" in the city of Kunming. The forum underlines Beijing's growing strategic interests in a region where its economic footprint has been deepening.
- The organisers have said the forum was attended by "high-level representatives" and "senior officials" from 19 countries. But two of these countries, Australia and Maldives, released statements rebutting the claim, emphasising that they did not participate officially.
- New Delhi has viewed China's recent moves in the Indian Ocean region warily, including the recent visit of a Chinese military tracking vessel, the Yuan Wang 5, to Sri Lanka. Moreover, India sees the IORA as an already established platform for the region.

Why has the Reserve Bank of India introduced an e-rupee?

What are central bank digital currencies? Are central banks introducing digital currencies to counter the influence of cryptocurrencies? Will such a move increase the risk of bank runs?

Prashanth Perumal

The story so far:
The Reserve Bank of India this week launched the digital rupee on a pilot basis. The digital currency will be offered by a select group of public and private banks in a few major cities initially, which can be used for both person-to-person and person-to-merchant transactions.

What is the digital rupee?
The digital rupee, or the e-rupee, is a central bank digital currency issued by the RBI. It is similar to the physical cash that you hold in your wallet except that the e-rupee is held electronically in a digital wallet overseen by the RBI. The digital rupee is recognised as legal tender by the RBI, and thus has to be accepted by everyone in the country as a medium of exchange. It is, however, different from deposits that you hold in a bank. Unlike deposits which are paid interest, the digital rupees in your wallet are not paid any interest by the central bank. Deposits held in banks can be converted into digital rupees and vice-versa.

Is there a need for the digital rupee?
The RBI believes that the digital rupee will make the rupee more attractive as a currency to users when compared to cryptocurrencies. Cryptocurrencies have been viewed by many investors as alternatives to fiat currencies which progressively lose value over time due to debasement by central banks. Since such a trend could threaten their sovereignty, central banks have been trying to come up with their own digital currencies. The RBI also believes that the digital rupee will be easier and more economical to produce when compared to physical cash notes. More importantly, transactions carried out using digital rupees, in contrast to physical transactions, are more easily traceable by authorities.

What are the risks?
The introduction of central bank digital currencies internationally has worried many who believe that it could disrupt the banking system. When interest rates offered by banks are low, people may be more prone to converting their bank deposits into digital currencies since they would not lose out much in the way of interest income by making the shift. Such an event could cause the cash holdings of banks to drop and hinder banks' capacity to create loans. It should be noted that the ability of banks to create loans is influenced by the amount of cash they hold in their vaults. This is because the cash position of a bank determines its ability to expand its loan book while keeping the risk of a bank run under control. The digital rupee could also play a crucial role in India's transition towards a cashless society. A rise in the use of the digital rupee could eventually free banks from having to maintain sufficient cash deposits before they expand their loan books. This could happen if digital rupee deposits turn out to be considered equivalent to other forms of virtual money such as deposits created initially as loans by banks. In such case, banks will be freed from the risk of bank runs which have traditionally served as a check on the unrestrained expansion of loan books.

What do the critics say?
Critics are not so enthused by the idea of a digital rupee. They point to the power that digital currencies give central banks to supervise economic activity, and believe that this could act as a deterrent to economic growth if legitimate economic activities are deemed illegal by governments. The future of central bank digital currencies as an alternative to private cryptocurrencies may also be overblown. Private cryptocurrencies have found demand among certain investors not simply because they are digital. Rather, they are thought to be better stores of value, exhibiting more stable purchasing power than fiat currencies.

THE GIST

- The Reserve Bank of India this week launched the digital rupee on a pilot basis.
- The RBI believes that the digital rupee will make the rupee more attractive as a currency when compared to cryptocurrencies.
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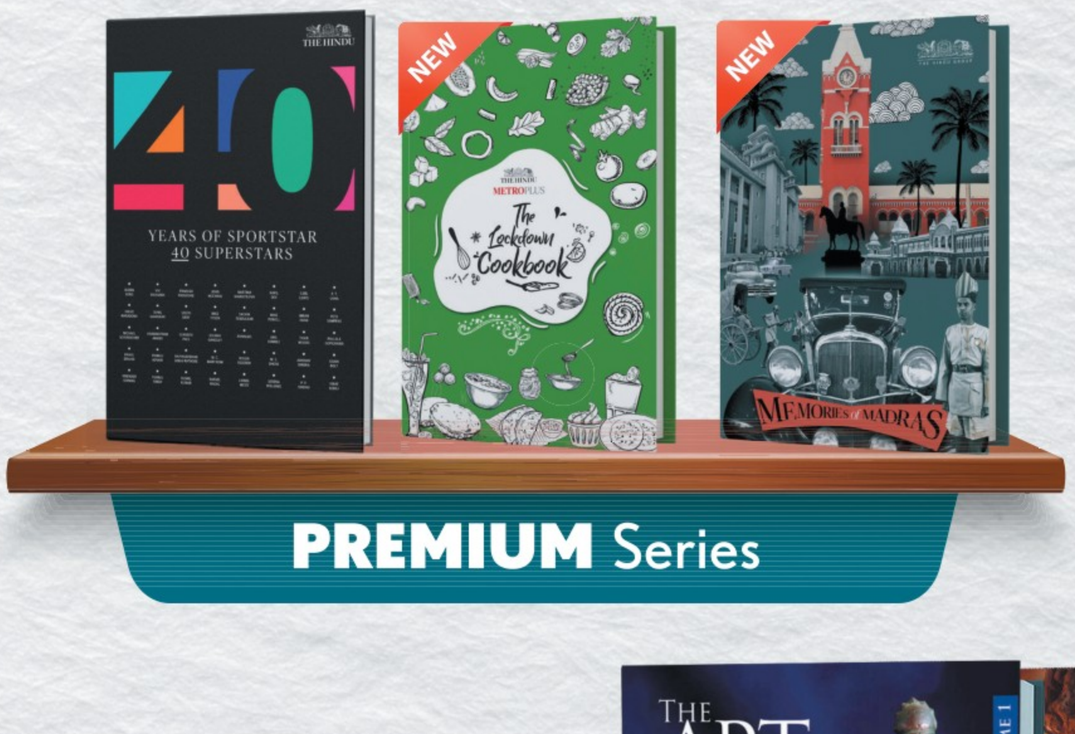

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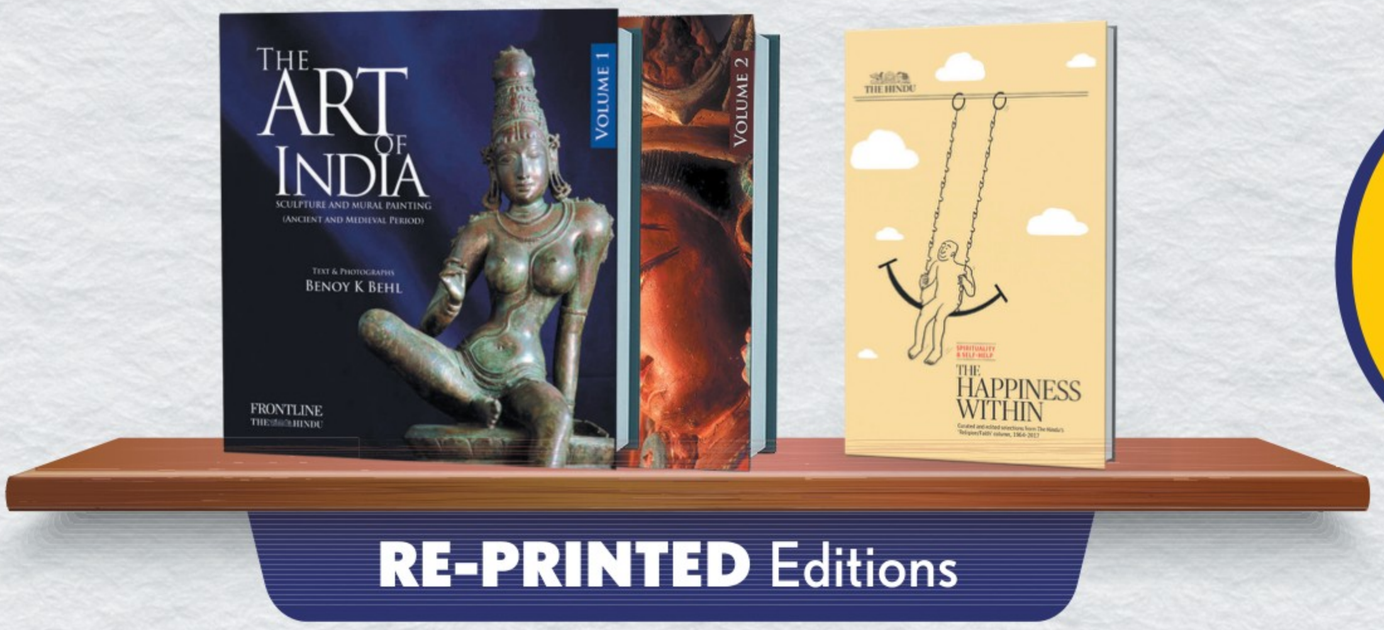

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KSRTC to run AC electric buses on six routes from Bengaluru

They will be operated to Mysuru, Madikeri, Virajpet, Chikkamagaluru, Davangere, and Shivamogga and will run on gross cost contract basis in which private operator will operate them for 10 years

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a phased manner, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation has started running e-buses. Under the Smart City project, 90 e-buses are plying. FILE PHOTO

In a first, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) will operate electric buses on inter-city routes. Under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme of the Union government, the corporation is all set to operate 50 such buses AC buses.

They will be run on gross cost contract (GCC) basis in which the private operator will operate the buses for 10 years. The KSRTC will pay ₹55 per kilometre as operational cost to the private operator.

All the buses will be operated from Bengaluru to Mysuru, Madikeri, Virajpet, Chikkamagaluru, Davangere and Shivamogga.

"A Hyderabad-based electric bus manufacturer has been selected under the FAME to operate buses. The KSRTC has selected six routes to run the buses. A prototype of the bus is expected to arrive by the end of December, then the induction will happen in a phased manner," said an official.

Charging stations

To facilitate the operation of the buses, the charging infrastructure will come up at various destinations, such as Majestic and depots of the cities where these buses will be operated. The official said that with a single charge, the bus can run up to 250 km. Assured distance operated is 450 km per day. Routes identified for running the e-buses fall within 250 km and are popular routes of the corporation.

The official added the operational cost of ₹55 per km that will be paid to the operator includes electricity charges as well. As per the understanding reached with the operator, the KSRTC will transfer a subsidy amount of ₹55 lakh per bus to the private operator. The operator has to bear the cost involved in employing driver, maintenance and others for a period of ten years.

In addition to electric buses, the KSRTC is also planning to run BSVI Multi Axle Sleeper buses. The KSRTC has invited suggestions from the general public on brand name with tagline and graphics for new services.

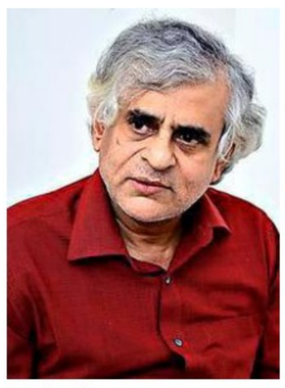
In a phased manner, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has started running e-buses. Under the Smart City project, 90 e-buses are plying on the roads. Another 300 buses under FAME-2 being operated in a phased manner.

We got independence, but freedom still monopoly of a few: Sainath

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

"We fought for independence and freedom, but we only got independence. Freedom still remains the monopoly of a few," said journalist P. Sainath, speaking at the launch of his new book: *The Last Heroes- Foot Soldiers of Indian Freedom*.

He said the narrative of the freedom movement was "skewed" as it focuses mainly on north India alone, while in reality, rebellion against the British began much earlier in the southern and eastern parts of the country.


P. Sainath

"It was a pan Indian freedom struggle, and yet the history is dominated by narratives of one region," he said. "The Adivasis in the east were the first to rebel against the atrocities of the East India Company, while the protests against the British began around the 1770s and 1790s in the south, we see none of these incidents documented," he added.

"There is no history that is unbiased. What matters is if it's a good bias or a bad bias. History has wiped out struggles of the tribes and common folk, and we have criminalized tribes which even impacts them legally till date. We should be able to form verifiable opinions to reframe history," he said.

The book profiles 15 hitherto unknown freedom fighters, who did not particularly fall under the definition of freedom fighters, as they did not go to jails or to the courts, but were cooks, homemakers, farmers who fought for freedom as vigorously as the other prominent stalwarts of the movement.

4 held for abducting and robbing techie

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a swift action, police arrested four persons who had abducted a techie from outside a mall close to the Ashok Nagar police station to rob valuables. The police seized a car, four mobile phones, and a phone from them. The accused, identified as Tarun Ganesh, 22, Vignesh, 23, Manikanta R., 21, and Charish J., 23, confronted Rahul Aradhya from Kalyan Nagar, and offered to provide escort service, and showed him photos of girls on their mobile.

Rahul refused, and went in an autorickshaw, but the accused followed him in their car, and confronted him near the mall. Sensing trouble, Rahul asked the autorickshaw driver to take him to the police station, but the accused intercepted him near the mall.

They dragged him out of the autorickshaw at knife-point, and forced him into their car and sped away.

The accused later took Rahul to Outer Ring Road (ORR) through areas of K.R. Puram, Bellandur and Electronics City, assaulted, forced him to withdraw cash from an ATM, took away his gold valuables before dumping him near his vehicle near M.G. Road and escaped.

Couple arrested for burglary

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Jnanabharathi police on Saturday arrested a couple for allegedly breaking into houses and stealing valuables.

The accused, Nagaraju A.C., 24, of Banashankari, 3rd stage, and his wife, Ramya, 23, used to move around residential localities to identify locked houses and burgle them. While Nagaraju would venture into a house, Ramya would keep a watch outside and signal in case of any impending danger. Police recently probing a house break-in, analysed CCTV footage and tracked down the accused.

IN THE COURT OF THE 82nd Addl. CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-83)
OS NO. 380 OF 2019
BETWEEN:
MR. VINOD KHANNA **PLAINTIFF**
AND:
M/S.SAMRUDDHI REALTY LIMITED AND OTHERS **DEFENDANTS**
NOTICE/SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANT
To
DEFENDANT No.1
M/S. SAMRUDDHI REALTY LIMITED
No.1, Tate Lane 2nd Floor,
Richmond Road Cross,
BENGALURU- 560 025
Represented by its
Chairman and Managing Director
V R Manjunath
DEFENDANT NO. 2
MR. HEMANG RAWAL No.3-B,
Samruddhi Regal High Street Cook Town BENGALURU- 560 025
DEFENDANT NO. 3
MR. RAVINDRA MADHUDI
A-1103, Mantri Greens,
No.1 Sampige Road, Malleshwaram,
BENGALURU-560 003
WHEREAS the above named Plaintiff instituted a suit against you for recovery money Rs.4,15,10,150/- (Rupees Four Crore Fifteen Lakhs Ten Thousand One Hundred and Fifty Only) with Interest from the date of suit till realization.
You are hereby summoned to appear before this court on **14-12-2022 at 11 am** person or through Advocate / Pleader to answer the questions to the same. Failing which the suit will be heard and determined as ex- parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 18th day of November, 2022
By order of the Court
Asst. Registrar
City Civil Court, Bengaluru
ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF
MR. RAHUL CARIAPPA K S
Advocates, 201, Commerce House 9/1, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru-560 052.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGCO25521)
No. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/22-23/4630 Date: 02.12.2022

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(E-Procurement mode only)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited invites bids for tender for the following works in Trans (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Kalaburgi:

1. Bid Enquiry No: SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/110kV Hattigur(Shahapur)- to 110kV Yadgiri, Dtd:02.12.2022 for **Conducting detailed survey for Re-construction of 110KV Hattigudur(Shahapur)-Yadgiri SC link line on SC towers by providing new 110KV conventional DC towers with SC line for a distance of about 22Kms along with existing corridor from Loc No: 1 to 7 & 3 to 115 in Shahapur Tq and Yadgiri Dist based on modern survey techniques.**
2. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/220kV Humnabad- to 110kV Bhalki, Dtd: 02.12.2022 for Conducting detailed survey for **Re-construction of existing old 110KV SC line on SC towers by new 110KV SC line on DC towers from 220KV Humnabad S/s to 110KV Bhalki S/s for a distance of about 36Kms using existing corridor in Humnabad Tq and Bidar Dist based on modern survey techniques.**
3. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/220kV Humnabad- to 110kV Hallikhed and Halbarga, Dtd: 02.12.2022 for **Conducting detailed survey for Re-construction of existing old 110KV DC line on DC towers by new DC line on DC towers from 220KV Humnabad S/s to 110KV Hallikhed and Halbarga S/s (220KV Humnabad-Bidar I & II Ckt old line) for a distance of about 39.4Kms S/s using existing corridor in Humnabad Tq and Bidar Dist based on modern survey techniques.**
4. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/220kV Humnabad- to 110kV Sastapur, Dtd: 02.12.2022 for **Conducting detailed survey for Re-construction of 110KV SC line on SC towers by new DC line on DC towers for a distance of about 33Kms from 220KV Humnabad S/s to 110KV Sastapur S/s along with construction of TB's in Humnabad Tq and Bidar Dist based on modern survey techniques.**
5. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/220kV Kapnoor- to 110kV Madiyal, Dtd: 02.12.2022 **for Conducting detailed survey for Stringing of second circuit on existing DC towers from 220/110KV Kapnoor S/s to 110/33/11KV Madiyal S/s for a distance of 42.98Kms along with construction of terminal bays at both ends and replacement of existing DC tower to MC tower between Loc No:135 to 152 for a distance of about 5.5Kms in Kalaburgi Dist based on modern survey techniques.**
6. SEE/Tr(W&M)C/KLB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/2022-23/220kV Shahabad- to 110kV Farhatabad(SBD-III), Dtd: 02.12.2022 for **Conducting detailed survey for Re-construction of existing old 110KV SC line on SC towers by new 110KV SC line on DC towers using lynx conductor from 220KV Shahabad to 110KV Farhatabad (SBD-III) from Loc No: 1 to 47 & 48 to 67 for a distance of about 21Kms in Shahabad Tq and Kalaburgi Dist based on modern survey techniques**

The bids will be received through e-procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the E-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to website: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink **"List of Tenders" on after 06.12.2022.** Any other details can be had from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-, Superintending Engineer (Ele),
Trans (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Sedam Road, Kalaburgi.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SONI , W/O Kishore Madanlal Kshatriya , R/O No 52/1, 2nd Flr, 3rd Cross, Mission Road, BLR–27. have changed my name as "Soni Kishore Madanlal" vide afdvt dtd 29/11/2022.

I, ANAMIKA Dass Manna ,W/O Sajit Kumar Krishnan ,R/O No B5–1085 Shobha Garrison, Nagasandra, BLR–73. have changed my name as "Anamika Chakravorty K" vide afdvt dtd 03/12/2022.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

I HAVE lost my two original documents at Banaswadi, I have raised an lost complaint on dtd 23/11/2022, FIR No. 0392766/2022, the regd two Sale Deeds a) Doc No. 8232/91–92, dtd 23–06–1992, stands in the name of Munianjinappa, and b) Doc No. 6838/87–88, dtd 12–10–1987, stands in the name of N. Ramanjinappa regd at Krishnarajapuram Sub Registrar, if anyone found the document Pls contact Mob No. 9731305305 / 9343865222

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 28th ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT MAYOHALL BANGALORE (CCH-29)
O.S. NO. 25721/2020
Between
ICICI Bank Limited having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390007 And its Branch Office at Mythri Centre, No. 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560068 **...Plaintiff**
And
Mr. Ilalayaa K. **...Defendant**
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT
To,
Mr. Ilalayaa K.
Aged about 52 years, D/W/O. Lakshmikanta Konger, R/a. 59, 2nd "F" Cross, Ramaiah Layout, Kacharakanahalli, Bangalore-560084 **...Defendant**
Whereas, the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking recovery of **Rs. 3,86,978.67/-** as on **07/02/2020** along with interest at 24% p.a. and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the 28th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge, Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH-29] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on **07/01/2023** at **11:00 A.M.** Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this court, this 23rd day of November, 2022.
By order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore
Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No. 109, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road,
Bangalore - 560052

IN THE COURT OF THE 26th ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT MAYOHALL, BANGALORE (CCH-20)
O.S. NO. 25307/2019
Between
ICICI Bank Limited having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390007 And its Branch Office at Mythri Centre, No. 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560068 **...Plaintiff**
And
Mr. V. Balamurugan **...Defendant**
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT
To,
Mr. V. Balamurugan,
Aged about 25 years, S/o. Veerappan, R/a. No. 62, Indlawadi, Anekal Main Road, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-562106 **...Defendant**
Whereas, the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking recovery of **Rs. 2,37,294.93/-** as on **04/10/2018** together with interest at the rate 18% p.a. and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the Court of the 26th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge, Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH-20] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on **16/01/2023** at **11:00 A.M.** Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this court, this 22th day of November, 2022.
By order of the Court
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court
Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore
Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No.109, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road,
Bangalore - 560052

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 28th ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT MAYO HALL, BANGALORE (CCH-29)
O.S No. 25265/2022
Between
ICICI Bank Limited having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara- 390007 And its Branch Office at Mythri Centre, No. 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560068 **...Plaintiff**
And
Mr. Kusumakara M.R. **...Defendant**
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT
To
Mr. Kusumakara M.R.
Aged about 33 years,
S/o. Rajanna
R/a. 43, 9th Cross, Ullal Main Road, Muneswaranagar, Near Sri Krishna Aramane Hotel, Bangalore- 560056 **...Defendant**
Whereas the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking recovery of **Rs. 5,91,889.48/-** as on **30/10/2021** along with interest at 24% p.a and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the 28th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge, Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH- 29] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on 09/01/2023 at 11 A.M. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Court, this 14th day of November, 2022
By order of the Court,
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore
Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No. 109, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road,
Bangalore- 560052

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE 72ND ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL, AT BANGALORE (CCH73)
P & SC No.25082/2022
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LATE Mr. DEVARAJ P and LATE Mrs. K. MANJULA.
Petitioners: **1. Mr.HEMANTH D.** S/o Late Devaraj P Aged about 12 years **2. Miss.HEMASHREE D.** D/o Late Devaraj P. Aged about 12 years, Since Minors, Represented by their Guardain, MRS. SHANKARAMMA P W/o Krishnappa M Aged about 62 Years, R/at # 64, Kanakanapalya, Jayanagar 2nd Block, Bangalore South, Jayanagar IIIrd Block, Bangalore 560011.
-V/s-
Respondent: Nil
PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that; a petition has made to this Court under Section 278 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT for grant of Letter of Administration. Be it known to all that no caveat has been entered and the said petition is posted for hearing on **14/12/2022 at 11.00 A.M,** before the Hon'ble Court of LXXII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge, Mayo hall, Bengaluru (CCH-73). Any person/s claiming to have any interest may participate in the proceedings before the grant of Letter of Administration.
SCHEDULE
All that piece and Parcel of property bearing no. 57 & 58/1, Old No.45/46, then 58/1/54 & New No.58/1/64 present corporation no.22, PID No.50-68 22, Jayanagara, 2nd Block Kanakanapalya, Bengaluru and bounded as follows:-
East by: Jayanagara Extension, **West by**: Road, **North by:** Huchappa's House, **South by:** House of Kalachari & Yellamma
And measuring east to West 96.00 Meters and North to South 16.0 Meters and measuring in all 1536.0 Sq. Meters and the residential building to be construction thereon.
Give under my hand and the seal of the court this 16-11-22.
By order of the Court.
Deputy Registrar, City Civil Court,
Mayo Hall Unit, Bengaluru
Advocates for Petitioners
Sd/-**VISHWANATH SHENDGE,** Advocate #95, Dwarkamai, Infantry Road, Bangalore 560001. M-9886303092
E-shendgelaw@gmail.com

CACHE

Show-stopper: Taylor Swift performs onstage during the NSAI 2022 Nashville Songwriter Awards. AFP

What happened during the presale of tickets for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour?

Why is Ticketmaster under allegations of anti-competitive practices? Is the online booking site a monopoly? How does the dynamic pricing system of the platform work? Does the company allow users to resell its tickets? How does it make a profit?

Nabeel Ahmed

The story so far:

Pop singer Taylor Swift's much awaited Eras tour is scheduled to start on March 17, 2023 in the U.S. However, fans waiting to see their favourite singer perform live, faced a herculean challenge – booking tickets online. Several users had to wait long hours to enter the booking phase only to be turned down as tickets were sold out. Online booking platform Ticketmaster, which was managing ticket sales for Swift's tour, said that the extraordinary demand and limited supply of tickets caused the problem. Fans of the pop star are organising a takedown of the platform, as U.S. Senators discuss plans to break down its monopoly.

What went wrong with the booking site?

Ticketmaster, the American ticket sale and redistribution company, began the presale of tickets for Taylor Swift's Eras tour on November 15. The presale was open to Capital One cardholders with queues opening 15 minutes prior to the sale time. However, users complained of long wait times and outages. There were around 14 million users on the site during the presale rush, and the company sold 2.4 million presale tickets, according to a report by *Vox*.

Ticketmaster downplayed the problem by stating that only 15% of customer interactions experienced problems on its site. The company stated that there was also a staggering number of bot attacks on their website leading to problems. Ticketmaster further cancelled the sale of tickets for the general public due to high demand and insufficient ticket inventory.

As a weapon against bots, the company has come up with a new ticketing product called #VerifiedFan. Artists can announce presales powered by #VerifiedFan that drives fans to a unique registration page.

How does Ticketmaster work?

Ticketmaster, owned by Live Nation, relies on fees generated by sale and redistribution of tickets for business. The company controls a majority of artists, venues and the market for tickets in the country. It also has a dynamic pricing system leading to rush when tickets for highly anticipated events are announced.

"In some instances, events on our platform may have tickets that are "market-priced," so ticket and fee prices may adjust over time based on demand," Ticketmaster has mentioned on their website.

In the past, the company has faced criticism for its dynamic pricing, as it does not publicise ticket costs before time, with prices changing on demand. Dynamic pricing is influenced by the number of people who are waiting in the queue at a particular moment, and reportedly there were over 2,000 people waiting in queue during the pre-sale of the Taylor Swift concert. Users claimed that tickets went for as high as $94,9500, due to this.

Is Ticketmaster new to such controversies?

Last month, Ticketmaster came under the scanner for its 'dynamic pricing' during the sale of tickets in concerts by Harry Styles, Coldplay and Blackpink in the U.K., *BBC* reported. Ticketmaster claimed on its website that it does not make any money from the face value of a ticket and covers costs from ticket fees alone. However, with dynamic pricing, the price of tickets often increase to match that of resale tickets which can be a lot higher. The platform allows verified users to resell tickets which can influence pricing. Ticketmaster said that introducing dynamic pricing was important to necessitate the maintenance of the live music industry. Artists and representatives set pricing strategy including fixed and market price points, the report shared. However, some artists have rejected the dynamic pricing structure to keep costs low for fans. Critics of dynamic pricing state that artists can control touting, reselling of tickets, by introducing checks like identification at the time of entry to the venue.

Founded in 1976, Ticketmaster has also faced criticism in recent years for its acquisition of competitors like Ticketron, TicketWeb, Musictoday and TicketsNow that led to it becoming one of the biggest tickets selling online platforms. In 2010 when Live Nation and Ticketmaster merged, officials said that it would encourage competition and send ticket prices down.

Why are U.S. Senators discussing Ticketmaster?

The chaos due to the Taylor Swift Eras Tour attracted the attention of U.S. congressmen reigniting the debate that arose during its 2010 merger. Tennessee's Attorney General, Jonathan Skrmetti, said he will launch a consumer protection investigation on the company after his office was bombarded with complaints from Swift fans. Senators are demanding action to "break the monopoly of Live Nation and Ticketmaster".

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez also criticised TicketMaster and its parent company Live Nation. "Daily reminder that Ticketmaster is a monopoly, its merger with Live Nation should never have been approved, and they need to be reined in. Break them up," she tweeted. Senators Richard Blumenthal, Amy Klobuchar, and Ed Markey in a letter to the Department of Justice (DOJ) wrote that "Live Nation has continued to abuse its dominant market position notwithstanding two prior consent decrees, we urge the Department to consider unwinding the Ticketmaster-Live Nation merger and breaking up the company", *Bloomberg* reported. "The high fees, site disruptions and cancellations that customers experienced shows how Ticketmaster's dominant market position means the company does not face any pressure to continually innovate and improve. We will hold a hearing on how consolidation in the live entertainment and ticketing industry harms customers and artists alike," said Senator Amy Klobucher, chair of the Senate's anti-trust panel.

The company has denied any anti-competitive practices.

How do online ticket booking platforms work?

Online booking systems allow users to self-book and pay through the website for events. These platforms work digitally on codes using programming languages like Java PHP and Python to develop online ticketing gateways. While some of the popular ticketing platforms like Ticketmaster and BookMyShow allow users with accounts to purchase tickets, they may put restrictions like invite-only tickets for certain events. Invites for special events may be shared through emails and SMS services.

The parameters for invite or closed group-based ticketing usually depend on organisers. In some cases, criterion for sales may be left to the platforms as well. While most online ticketing platforms only facilitate the purchase and booking of tickets, platforms like Ticketmaster also allow users to resell purchased tickets.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Nine years ago, former South African president Nelson Mandela passed away, aged 95. A quiz on the statesman who was fondly called Madiba

Srinivasan Ramani

QUESTION 1

It is well known that Mandela spent 27 years in prison and 18 of them in Robben Island, the infamous island that hosted maximum security political prisoners, mostly anti-Apartheid activists. Apart from Mandela and Jacob Zuma, which former prisoner went on to become President in post-Apartheid South Africa?

QUESTION 2

The title of this poem, that Mandela used to recite, while in prison to other inmates, was used to name a Hollywood film that featured him as president. Name the poem and its author.

QUESTION 3

Name the paramilitary organisation, part of the African National Congress, that was founded by Mandela in the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960.

QUESTION 4

In a letter from Robben Island, Mandela wrote, "It was the first time that a country had come from another continent not to take something away, but to help Africans to achieve their freedom". What was he referring to?

QUESTION 5

After becoming President, who did Mandela appoint as the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that worked towards restorative justice after the end of Apartheid in South Africa?

Visual question:
President, Mandela wore these shirts that were termed "Madiba shirts" for their distinctiveness. Which Indonesian art form were these shirts associated with? WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the December 2 edition of the daily quiz: 1. Britney Spears won the Grammy Award for this song under this category. **Ans: 'Toxic', Best Dance Recording**

2. Mars lander, red bodysuit and heart of the ocean, all these elements feature in this song. **Ans: Oops!... I did it again**

3. In 2001, Britney Spears joined this icon on stage for this song at Madison Square Garden. **Answer: Michael Jackson and 'The way you make me feel'**

4. The musical inspiration for the opening string portion in Britney's 'Toxic' is said to be from this song in this Bollywood movie. **Answer: Tere Mere Beech Mein; *Ek Duuje Ke Liye***

5) Spears, Enrique Iglesias, Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez and Lin-Manuel Miranda have this common. **Ans: They all had special guest appearances on the sitcom *How I met your mother***

6) This famous model performed 'Baby One More Time' during a lip sync battle. **Ans: Kate Upton**

Visual: The year in which Britney got the Hollywood Walk of Fame star. **Ans: 2003**

Early Birds: Kukjing Takuk| Bijo Paul

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

My housing provider is renovating the building

We were thoroughly underwhelmed by the movie we went to watch yesterday

S. Upendran

"What are you doing here? I thought you were going on a picnic with your friends."

"Are you crazy? How can you expect us to go on a picnic in this weather? It's been pouring since yesterday. Why don't we watch the movie that I'd recommended last week?"

"Like you, many of my friends were raving about the movie. So, I saw it yesterday. To tell you the truth, I was underwhelmed by it."

"Underwhelmed? Does the word even exist?"

"It exists all right! When you say that you were 'underwhelmed by something', what you mean is that you weren't really impressed by it."

"In other words, in your case, the movie didn't really excite you. It failed to make an impact on you"

"Yes, that's right! It didn't excite me at all. In fact, I was disappointed by it. Here's another example. *We went with a lot of expectations. But most of us were underwhelmed by the former Vice Chancellor's speech.*"

"My friend went to buy a new phone. But he was underwhelmed by what was on offer."

"One thing to remember is that 'underwhelmed' is used in informal contexts. It's mostly used humorously."

"Did you stay up late to watch the film?"

"No, I spent most of yesterday helping Geetha move into her new apartment."

"Geetha didn't tell me she was moving. But why did she? She loved the old place."

"Yes, she really loved the place. But her home provider wanted her to..."

"Home provider?"

"Home provider and housing provider are the terms used nowadays to refer to a landlord. As you know, English is trying to be as gender neutral as possible. So, ..."

"Home provider can be used to refer to both – landlord and landlady."

"Very good! Geetha's new home provider is a nice old lady. Very helpful."

"That's how most home providers are in the beginning. After some time, they'll stop listening to your problems. Did anyone else help Geetha move?"

"Quite a few of her friends did. Geetha, together with some of her friends, is planning to go to Darjeeling during the Christmas break."

"Shouldn't it be, Geetha, together with her friends, are planning to go to Darjeeling?"

"No, there's a difference between 'together with' and 'and'. Adding 'together with' to a noun doesn't make the subject plural."

"In other words, what you're saying is that the main sentence is 'Geetha is planning to go to Darjeeling'."

"That's right! If you'd used 'and', then you would have said, Sujatha and her friends are going to Darjeeling."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Cumber:
restrict (someone or something) so as to make free movement difficult

Synonyms: restrain, encumber

Usage:
I am cumbered with work commitments.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/cumberpro

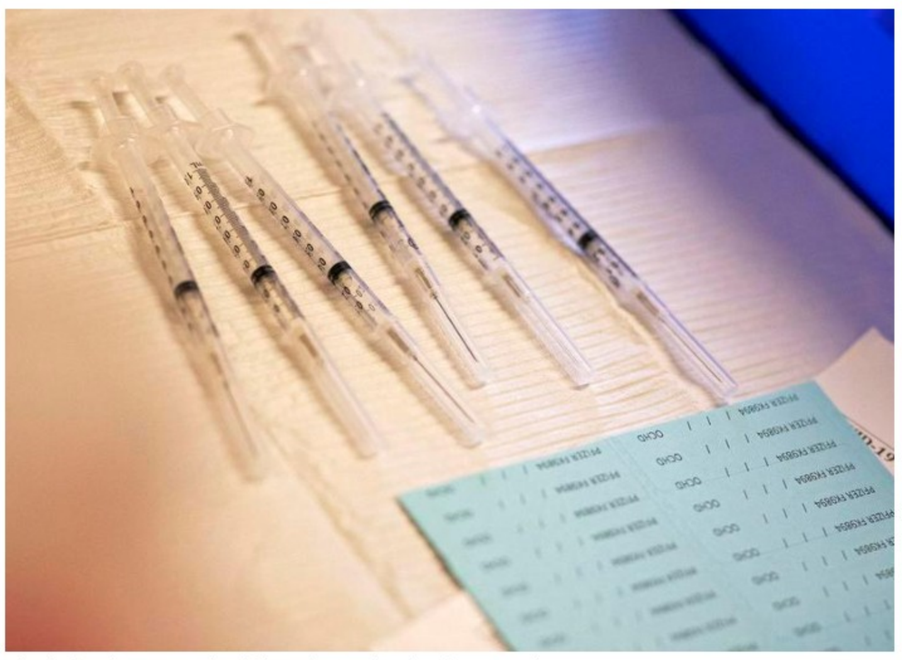
International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈkʌmbə/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Karnataka should have vaccine policy on the lines of Kerala, says TAC

It says a technical expert committee should examine the existing universal/national immunisation programme followed in Karnataka and recommend changes to be made, if any

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU



The draft policy report should be submitted within three months, TAC says. FILE PHOTO

Karnataka should formulate a vaccine policy on the lines of what has been formulated by the Kerala government, State's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recommended:

In its recent meeting, the TAC has recommended that a technical expert committee be set up for drafting the policy.

The committee should comprise senior paediatricians (covering childhood vaccinations) with affiliation to Indian Academy of Paediatrics, senior physicians (covering adult vaccinations, including pregnancy and women) with affiliation to Association of Physicians of India (API), specialists in infectious diseases and those managing vaccine preventable diseases.

"Senior public health professionals from the State Health Department and professors of community medicine from medical colleges besides representatives from WHO and UNICEF should also be included," states the report of TAC.

The committee, which should be tasked with submitting the draft policy report within three months, should examine the existing universal/ national immunisation programme followed in Karnataka and recommend changes to be made, if any, the report stated. "It should examine the requirement of introducing newer vaccines, such as Influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine and Human Papilloma vaccine for adults apart from vaccines for rabies and other diseases for children. The committee should also prepare a protocol for vaccines to be given for immunocompromised persons, organ transplant recipients, cancer patients, and other vulnerable and high-risk groups. Moreover, the criteria of categorising vaccines as mandatory, optional, and advisory should be enlisted in the policy," the TAC has said in its report.

'Committee should prepare a protocol for vaccines for immunocompromised persons'

TAC chairman M.K. Sudarshan said the committee should inform the Health Department about epidemiological and cost effectiveness studies, successful strategies/stories, good practices, innovative approaches, regarding usage of vaccines and immunisation programmes. State Health Commissioner Randeep D. said the recommendations will be placed before the government.

48 lakh children to be inoculated against Japanese Encephalitis

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Around 48 lakh children, between the age group of 1 and 15 years, in the State will receive the Japanese Encephalitis vaccine in a special vaccination drive which will start from December 5 and last for three weeks.

68,000 cases

While a total of 68,000 cases of Japanese Encephalitis are reported in the country every year, around 20-30% patients die because of the disease.

"Among those who are cured, 30% to 50% of people end up with sensory and motor weakness, and other permanent physical and mental disabilities," Health Minister K. Sudhakar said while announcing the campaign.

Free of cost

The children will be vaccinated free of cost by the Union government.

The Minister further said, "In the first week of December, vaccinations will primarily be focused on private and government schools. Following this, in the next two weeks, we will focus on vaccination drives in health institutions, Anganwadi centres and among communities. The Union Health Ministry will supply us with the Jenvac vaccine to conduct the drive."

Thousands attend over 100 events at Bangalore Literature Festival

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Sudha Murty signing books for fans at the Bangalore Literature Festival on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

After two years of low-key festival, the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF) took place on a large scale this year and saw thousands attend. While the last two editions took place in a hybrid mode, this year, literature enthusiasts took part in over 100 events that were organised on the lawns of Lalit Ashok over the weekend.

Among many others, Booker prize winner Shehan Karunatilaka, Jananpith awardee Damodar Mauzo, International Booker prize winner Geetanajali Shree, film personalities Kabir Bedi and Farhan Akhtar, and sportspersons Sunil Chhetri V.V.S. Laxman were some popular personalities who took to the stage at BLF, this year.

The programming was spread out across four stages where panels were held simultaneously, spoiling enthusiasts for choice. This, apart from a Children's Literature Festival at two stages. The stages at the Festival were named Gandhadagudi, Yuvarathna and Raajakumara, after popular films by the late actor Puneeth Rajkumar to mark his memory.

On Sunday, author A. S. Prabhakar who has edited a memorial volume on the actor said Puneeth Rajkumar inherited the aura of his father matinee idol Dr. Rajkumar and continued his legacy. "It is rare that a popular hero like him in this day and age, is recognised for his individual personality rather than his roles and films he did, which is why he has become sort of immortal and will be remembered for a long time to come," he said.

On the second day of BLF, author Manoranjan Byapari recalled his journey of being at refugee camps and his time in prison, where too there were caste atrocities, he recalled. Speaking on why he started to write, he said a great leader once said that pen is mightier then sword and that is when I wanted to try it.

"But today seeing it in a different perspective, I think sword is being wielded more than the pen in the society. But I wrote the book "How I became a writer" an autobiography translated by Anurima Chanda which describes the struggles, humiliations encountered as a writer," he said. Films and sports also had their share at BLF, this year. Shobu Yarlagadda, the producer of the blockbuster Baahubali franchise, films like RRR were opening new vistas and recognition for Indian cinema globally. "RRR is in the league of the Marvel universe and that is how it is received as well by critics and filmmakers. This will pave way for Indian cinema to be seen for what it is globally," he said.

Talking of the recent crisis in Bollywood, Malayalam filmmaker Kamal K.M, said earlier Bollywood had a historical duty to present cinema as a national art form, but from the 90s it started to cater to the aspirations of the diaspora, essentially erasing its own culture. Noted film actor Ramesh Arvind spoke about his film career and presented his book on "simple techniques to achieve success".

Leopards still not been spotted

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The two leopards that were seen in the outskirts of the city last week have not been spotted since.

Though traps have been set up by the Forest Department to catch the leopards, they have been elusive.

It is believed that the leopards might have gone into the forest area.

However, they are still on a vigil and have advised the public to desist from venturing out alone in the early mornings and late nights for a few more days.

On November 31, a leopard had killed a spotted deer in the Turahalli State Forest Area. It has since then not been spotted either by the locals or the officials of the Forest Department.

Another leopard was spotted near Chikkajala on Kempegowda International Airport Road on November 30. CCTV footage had recorded the movements of the animal near the ITC Factory.

Traps have been set up by the forest department near the ITC Factory.

Over 70,000 enrol for Agnipath rally in Bidar

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Around 70,357 aspirants have registered themselves from the six districts of Belagavi, Bidar, Kalaburgi, Koppal, Raichur, and Yadgir for the Agnipath rally which will be held in Bidar between December 5 and 22. According to the Ministry of Defence, this is one of the largest rallies in south India and the last in the series under the Agnipath scheme.

The rally will be conducted at the Nehru Stadium, Bidar, by Army Recruitment Office, Belagavi, under the aegis of Zonal Recruitment Office, Bengaluru, for volunteer male candidates from the six districts.

"Candidates would be selected on the basis of physical tests, medicals, followed by a common entrance exam to test their mental proficiency. Merit alone determines the final selection to the Indian Army. The enthusiasm, zeal to serve is well palpable as reported from various districts," the ministry said. It added that the district administration has equally participated in ensuring the success of the rally and that the regular meetings chaired by the District Commissioner, Bidar, are reflective of the commitment, synergy and cooperation.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, DEC. 05	
RISE 06:28	SET 17:52
RISE 15:48	SET 03:51
TUESDAY, DEC. 06	
RISE 06:28	SET 17:53
RISE 16:29	SET 04:42
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 07	
RISE 06:29	SET 17:53
RISE 17:14	SET 05:35

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	31	22
Mysuru	31	20
Bengaluru	27	19

Bengaluru Today
28°C The weather will be mostly dry. Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night will be slight cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
27°C A dry weather to prevail. Day will be comfortable and humid. Night remains cool.

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THE HINDU
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Housekeeping staffer from Nepal killed by his friends over harassment

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The police found the highly decomposed body of Dhansingh Dhame, 23, in a storm-water drain on Sunday evening

The Hennur police in a swift action cracked a murder case and arrested five Napali nationals for killing one of their colleagues, allegedly unable to bear his harassment .

The police found the highly decomposed body of Dhansingh Dhame, 23, in a storm-water drain on Sunday evening. The police after identifying the deceased rushed to a paying guest accommodation in Babusapalya where the deceased was working as a housekeeping staffer.

Inquiry revealed that Dhansigh Dhame was last seen with his colleagues and the police took them into custody for questioning.

Detailed questioning

A detailed questioning led them to confess to the murder. Bhimashankar Guled, DCP, east division, said that the deceased Dhansingh and the accused Dinesh Singh Dhame, Sher Singh Dhame, Deepak Dhame , Narendra Dhame and a juvenile are from the same hometown and some of the accused studied together with the deceased.

From the beginning, Dhansingh used to harass the accused and humiliate them from college days. Even after coming to Bengaluru and working he would get drunk every day and harass them.

Last Wednesday, when Dhansingh in an inebriated state started harassing them, the accused as per the plan took him out on the pretext of getting him cigarettes, took him to an isolated place and strangulated him with a belt and assaulted him on his private parts to kill him on the spot.

They later dumped the body in the storm-water drain and returned to work. The murder came to light when passers-by noticed a highly decomposed body floating in the drain.

Police have taken the accused into custody.

Meanwhile, the police have launched a massive manhunt to track down six people, including three women, who killed a 30-year-old man in KP Agarahara in the early hours on Sunday.

According to the police, the assailant confronted the man and beat him before crushing him to death using a boulder and walked away.

Based on the CCTV footage, the police are trying to track down the accused while checking the missing complaints in and around the city to identify the deceased.

Police suspect that the murder could be due to financial row and are further probing the matter.

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INBRIEF

AIDSO protests against stopping scholarships

The All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) held a protest in Malleswaram in Bengaluru on December 4, Sunday, criticising the Central government's move to withhold pre-matric scholarships for SC/ST, OBC and minority students studying in Classes I to VIII.

Speaking at the protest, State president AIDSO State president Ashwini K.S. said it was unfortunate at a time when students were already moving out of government schools owing to poor infrastructure and other issues. She demanded that the decision be rescinded immediately.

Unity conference of Dalit groups tomorrow

On the occasion of B.R. Ambedkar's Mahaparinirvana day on Tuesday, various factions of Dalit Sangharsha Samiti have organised a unit conference at the National College Grounds in Bengaluru.

At a press conference, Dalit leader N. Venkatesh said that it was aimed at "resisting the attack of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party on the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice." As many as 12 Dalit organisations have come together under this samiti. More than 1 lakh people may gather, he said.

The conference will be inaugurated by Rama Bai Anand Teltumbde at 12.30 p.m. and retired High Court Judge H.N. Nagamohan Das will deliver the keynote address. The former Advocate General Ravivarma Kumar, besides leaders, including Indudhara Honnapura, will participate. Cultural events will be inaugurated by theatre director C. Basavalingaiah at 11 a.m.

Govt. will provide buses for rural schoolchildren: CM

The State government will provide school buses to rural schoolchildren under the public-private partnership mode, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said in Shiggaon in Haveri district on Sunday.

"We will soon start the project. That will help rural children reach school on time and return home safely. This will be taken up in the PPP mode. The pilot project will be launched in Haveri district," Mr. Bommai said. He said that further details will be made available in a few days. He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for a bus depot in Shiggaon.

Rowdy-sheeters more keen on ULB route to get into mainstream politics

Many such people, claiming to have 'turned a new leaf', are lobbying to secure the poll ticket across party lines, according to a senior police officer

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been drawing flak over multiple rowdy-sheeters being seen with its leaders or even joining the party over the last two weeks. While many Ministers and office-bearers defended the association initially, saying they are "reformed", the party has now distanced itself from them and announced at least in one case – that of 'Silent' Sunil – that he would not be inducted into the party. It is learnt that the party national leadership intervened in the matter.

Interestingly, even amid a political storm over the issue, the BJP has nominated one of them from Bengaluru, Manjunath, to Anekal Municipal Council. 'Fighter' Ravi joined the BJP at its head office recently. Party's national general secretary C.T. Ravi said everyone on the rowdy list could not be considered a rowdy, and gave his own example. He said his name also figured in the list for "political reasons".

A video grab showing 'Silent' Sunil sharing the stage with BJP leaders at a function in Bengaluru.

A senior police officer said several more rowdy-sheeters claiming to have "turned a new leaf" are lobbying to secure the ticket for the upcoming civic polls across party lines. Many BJP leaders have said that there is nothing wrong in those "reformed" being given a chance.

A long history

Sources in the city police said rowdy-sheeters seeking political patronage, cutting across party lines, is a common phenomenon close to elections. Though the involvement of rowdy-sheeters in politics began in the late 1970s, they made their debut in electoral politics only in the late 1980s. From the former "don" M.P. Jayaraj who tried unsuccessfully to become an MLA, many have tried and some have been successful too. Some went on to become "respectable" and even Ministers. However, presently, most of them are not keen to contest the Assembly polls, but have set their eyes on civic polls, which have always seen more rowdy-sheeters in the fray.

'Silent' Sunil, who shared the stage with all the three Bengaluru MPs recently, is keen to contest the upcoming civic polls from a ward in Chamarajpet, sources said. The former rowdy-sheeter Jedarahalli Krishnappa and Bettanagere Shankar in Nelamangala are also keen to contest the urban local body (ULB) polls, sources said. Wilson Garden Naga was reportedly seen at Minister V. Somanna's office earlier in the week, tough the latter has denied even knowing him.

Now Ministers

A keen interest in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is not new to the underworld. For instance, the council of 2015-20 had over 20 members with rowdy sheets against them at some point in their lives, sources said. A host of them has now moved from the Congress to the BJP with four MLAs from the Congress defecting to the ruling party in 2019. At least two Ministers in the present Cabinet were former rowdy-sheeters, made their political debut in the BBMP and later grew to become MLAs.

"Rowdy-sheeters contesting elections is only a continuation of liquor, real estate, capitation mafias directly coming to power. Rowdy-sheeters would have usually dominated a slum pocket, but rarely do they have the ability to swing votes across an Assembly segment. So they begin by contesting ULB and panchayat elections. Some of them learn the ropes of the game and then become MLAs. This has been a tried-and-tested trajectory," said former police officer B.K. Shivaram, who has worked in the anti-rowdy squad in the city police for a long time.

VHP now wants to hold rituals on Bababudangiri shrine premises

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

After their long-pending demand for the appointment of Hindu priests at the cave shrine atop Bababudangiri in Chikkamagaluru taluk was fulfilled, though on a temporary basis, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad is now asking that they be permitted to conduct the rituals during the Datta Jayanti on the premises of the syncretic shrine.

VHP district secretary Yogeshraj Urs told *The Hindu* that the organisation had submitted an application to the management committee of Sri Guru Dattatreya Bababudan Swamy Dargah/Peetha, seeking permission to conduct a "homa" and other rituals next to the *tulasi katte*, platform of the tulsi plant, on the shrine premises during Datta Jayanti celebrations.

"All these years, we were holding homas in a shed outside the disputed area. This time, we have sought to hold them on the shrine premises. Anyhow, Hindu priests have been appointed to conduct Hindu rituals. They will do the rituals," he said. Chikkamagaluru district administration has made elaborate security arrangements to avoid any untoward incident during the celebrations this year.

The Commissioner of Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department, on Saturday, issued an order clearing the appointment of Sandeep P.M. of Bagepalli in Chickballapur district and Sridhar K. of Bommanakudige of Sringeri taluk as priests for Datta Jayanti celebrations "on a temporary basis".

The names were recommended by the eight-member management committee, constituted recently

Pending in court

Meanwhile, Syed Ghouse Mohiyuddin Shah Khadri, the hereditary administrator of the shrine, has opposed the constitution of the management committee and the appointment of priests. He told *The Hindu* that the High Court had ordered to maintain the *status quo* on the issue. The matter is still pending before the court, he said. He had filed a writ appeal challenging the court's order that quashed the previous government's order authorising him to appoint the muzawar to perform rituals at the shrine.

Narrative of freebies insultingly equates people's struggle for their rights to begging: Isaac

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The narrative of terming the welfare state as "freebies" or "revdi culture", a term used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently, "insultingly equates" the struggle of people for their rights to "begging", said T.M. Thomas Isaac, former Finance Minister of Kerala, from the CPI(M).

He delivered a talk on 'The phony debate on freebies: A coordinated attack on democracy and welfare', at an event organised by the Bengaluru Collective in the city on Sunday.

Dr. Isaac questioned the motive behind terming the democratic rights and aspirations of people in critical areas such as access to healthcare, housing and food as "freebies". He said this attack on the welfare state could be seen as part of the larger push towards privatisation of essential services and the government washing its hands off its constitutional obligations towards the people.

"This narrative also impacts the ability of political parties to properly articulate the aspirations and needs of the people, limiting the scope and extent of political debate through the bogey of 'fiscal rectitude'," he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

To lower depths

As the Legislative Assembly elections are nearing in Karnataka, the standard of political rhetoric seems to be sinking lower by the day. As if competing with each other, JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, Congress MLA and former Minister P.T. Parameshwar Naik, and BJP's national general secretary C.T. Ravi have used abusive or uncivil language to criticise their rivals in the recent past. In the latest remark, Mr. Ravi took a jibe at the former Congress Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and called him "Siddaramullah Khan" and criticised the Congress' policies, trying to yet again project him as a man trying to appease the minority community. Mr. Ravi went on to challenge Mr. Siddaramaiah, who is scouting for a constituency, to contest against him in Chikkamagaluru in the coming Assembly elections. While Mr. Kumaraswamy and Mr. Naik tendered apologies for their style of criticism of their political rivals, there is no sign of anything like that coming from Mr. Ravi. The quality of public speaking by politicians could only get worse in 2023, the year when Karnataka goes to polls.

When the earth beckons

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai *(in picture)* was in the mood for a moral science class at a recent event and he held forth on men's particular obsession with owning land. "Even while travelling in a car, two men begin a conversation on land if they spot a parcel of vacant plot," he said. And then he went on to tell a story.

The friend of a property-obsessed landlord showed him a man working on a piece of land and said, "Every time he strikes the land with his spade, he is saying 'this earth is mine'." They moved on and then they came across a graveyard. He pointed to men digging a grave for a dead man and told the landlord, "Now, every time they are striking the land, the earth is saying 'you are mine' to the man." The story drew applause, but it is hard to say if anyone, particularly political leaders, remembered anything by the end of the programme.

Money and muscle power

After fierce debates between Opposition parties and the ruling BJP on recruitment scams, corruption, and voter data theft, a new debate has begun on rowdy-sheeters entering politics. The State BJP leadership is red-faced after its top leaders shared the stage with a criminal, 'Silent' Sunil, last week. Wasting no time, the Congress attacked the BJP and alleged that the Basavaraj Bommai-led administration has been going soft on rowdy-sheeters and admitting them into the ruling party, keeping an eye on the BBMP and Assembly elections.

The BJP leaders, including the Chief Minister, have asked the Congress leaders to count the number of rowdy-sheeters in their party.

Revenue Minister R. Ashok hit back at the Opposition party saying "the Congress is a factory for preparing rowdies" and some leaders even questioned the background of KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar.

The entry of such elements to elections can stop only if muscle and money power are no longer factors in the polls.

Nagesh Prabhu

Graffiti: Police book *suo motu* case

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

The Shiralakoppa police in Shikaripur taluk of Shivamogga have booked a *suo motu* case against unknown people on the charge of promoting enmity between groups after they noticed "Join CFI" written on walls in different locations of the town.

A constable noticed the writing at eight different locations on November 28. Based on his information, a case was registered under Sections 153 A and 153 B of the Indian Penal Code.

The content has been construed as an appeal by supporters of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) to to join the Campus Front of India (CFI).

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through e-Procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from registered Agencies for the following works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
1	South-1	BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/2095/ 2022-23, Date: 02.12.2022	33,28,062/- / 66,600/-	15.12.2022 upto 4:00 PM	17.12.2022 after 3:00 PM
2		BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/2096/ 2022-23, Date: 02.12.2022	33,52,768/- / 67,100/-		
3		BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/2097/ 2022-23, Date: 02.12.2022	66,68,420/- / 1,33,400/-		
			Sd/- **Executive Engineer (South-1)**		
4	South-2	BWSSB/EE(S2)/AE/373/ 2022-23, Date: 29.11.2022	19,07,596/- / 47,700/-	15.12.2022 upto 4:00 PM	17.12.2022 after 4:00 PM
			Sd/- **Executive Engineer (South-2)**		
5	South-West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/979/ 2022-23, Date: 01.12.2022 **(Reserved for ST Category)**	13,43,879/- / 16,800/-	13.12.2022 upto 4:00 PM	15.12.2022 after 3:00 PM
			Sd/- **Executive Engineer (South-West-2)**		

Office of the Chief Engineer (North), 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

6	Central	BWSSB/EEC/PB/2454/2022-23, Date: 01.12.2022 - (2nd Call)	10,52,423/- / 26,400/-	12.12.2022 upto 5:00 PM	13.12.2022 after 5:01 PM
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Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

7	DC& BM	BWSSB/EE(DC&BM)/PB/2682/ 2022-23, Date: 02.12.2022	56,68,000/- / 1,13,400/-	14.12.2022 upto 4:00 PM	16.12.2022 after 4:00 PM
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Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM-East), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore-560009

8	WWM-N (K&T Valley)	BWSSB/EWKT-N/PB/1432/ 2022-23, Date: 01.12.2022	71.66 Lakhs / 1.691 Lakhs	12.12.2022 upto 4:00 PM	13.12.2022 at 4:10 PM
			Sd/- **Executive Engineer (WWM-N) (K&T Valley)**		

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurment process can be obtained by logging on to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

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JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA, Yenigadale, Chintamani Taluk, Chikkaballapura District
Phone: 9108328537, **E-mail:**jnvychikkaballapura@gmail.com

INVITATION FOR ALUMNI MEET-2022-23

Dear Alumni,

With immense pleasure we cordially invite you for the Alumni Meet being conducted on **18.12.2022 (Sunday) at 11.00 a.m.** in Vidyalaya Premises. Every alumnus is requested to bring a passport size photograph. Your gracious presence is solicited at your alma mater to reunite and cherish all the nostalgic moments spent together.

Sd/- Principal, Staff & Students,
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KPTCL invites bids against Bid Enquiry No. KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/EE(O)/AEE-4/T-9/Desktop Computer/2022-23/EPR-724 Dt: 03.12.2022 (Call-2) for **Supply of 4 Nos of i5 Desktop Computer with accessories and windows professional Liscenced including MS Office, Installation & Demonstration of the same confirming to our Technical Specifications, F.O.R.D. of Store/site basis including all applicable GST under Transmission (Maintenance), KPTCL, BRAZ Circle, Bengaluru."** The detailed notification regarding the subject tenders can be got by logging **on or after 05.12.2022** to **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink e-Procurement-KPTCL or to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, (Elec.) Trans(M), BRAZ, KPTCL, UAS Campus, Hebbal, Bengaluru-560024.
Ph & Fax: 080-23415347

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

T.S.SRIDHARAN aged 84 yrs Rtd., Chief General Manager Maharastra Telecom circle S/o Late Dr. T.R.Seshadri, Thanjavur attained Acharyan Tiruvadi on December 03rd 2022 at Thanjavur. Mourned by wife Usha, son Srinivas, daughter Nirmala, son in law Rajesh, Daughter in law Yamini, Grand daughters Sanjana and Aishwarya and family members of Dr.Seshadri
Contact: 8591089918, 9869654896, 9444216092.

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Sankeertana Yatra at Srirangapatna sees big turnout

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A large number of Hanuman devotees marched through the streets of Srirangapatna on Sunday during the Sankeertana Yatra organised by Hindu Jagran Vedike to mark Hanuma Jayanti celebrations.

The yatra, which was held amid tight police security, passed off peacefully, barring a futile bid by a devotee to jump across the barricade erected around the Jamia Masjid in the town.

"It was a small issue and the police handled it properly," said Inspector-General of Police, Southern Range, Praveen Madhukar Pawar. He said the volunteers among the organisers helped the police in preventing the security breach. Hundreds of police personnel had been deployed in the town since the last two days, while 24 CCTV cameras, 20 hand-held cameras and two surveillance drones monitored the crowds to ensure security, he said.

A large number of Hanuman devotees descended on the historical town on Sunday, attired in saffron robes and wearing shawls before taking out a march from Anjaneyaswamy Temple at Ganjam that passed through the streets of Srirangapatna before culminating at the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple.

Kannada groups ask Bommai to stall visit of Maharashtra Ministers

The Ministers are planning a visit to Belagavi tomorrow to meet Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti leaders who have been demanding merger of Marathi-speaking areas with Maharashtra; Karnataka government has opposed the meeting

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Kannada organisations have asked Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to handle the issue of Maharashtra Ministers planning a visit to Belagavi on December 6 politically and not to address it as an administrative issue.

Ashok Chandaragi, convener of the central committee of Kannada organisations in Belagavi district, urged Mr. Bommai to request the BJP high command to direct the Maharashtra government not to send the Ministers to Belagavi. ". The BJP is in power at the Centre and in the two States. It should not be difficult for its leadership to resolve such differences among leaders in an amicable manner," he said.

Strong objections: Police officials speaking to a commuter at the Kuganoli check post in Belagavi. FILE PHOTO

Chandrakant Patil, Maharashtra Minister and member of the high-powered committee on the boundary dispute, is set to visit Belagavi on December 6. He will be accompanied by committee colleagues Minister Shambhuraj Desai and MP Dhairyashil Mane.

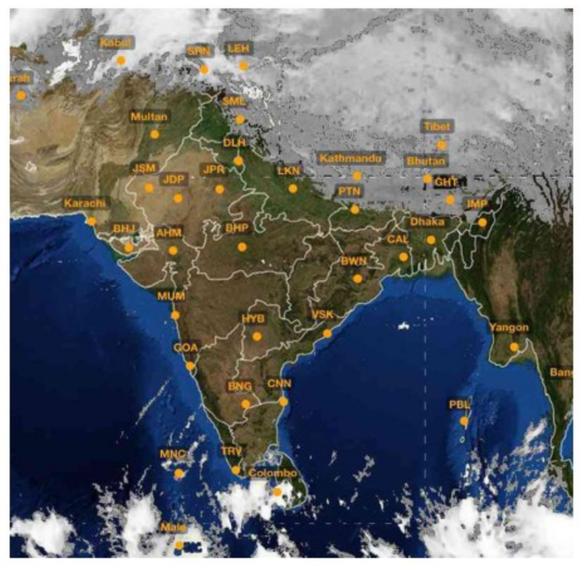
They plan to meet Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti leaders in Belagavi, who have been demanding the merger of the city and other Marathi-speaking areas with Maharashtra. Karnataka has already raised objections to the visit, saying such a visit at this juncture when the dispute is before the Supreme Court, was not appropriate.

Mr. Chandaragi said if Karnataka's objections were defied and the Ministers end up in Belagavi, Mr. Bommai should send a delegation of Cabinet Ministers from Karnataka to visit all the Kannada-speaking areas in Maharashtra such as Solapur, Jat, Nanded, and Sangli-Miraj. He said he would write to the Chief Minister in this regard.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike convener Deepak Gudaganatti said that if the leaders were allowed to hold a meeting with the MES, he and his supporters would storm into the meeting.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Andaman and Nicobar Islands.Squally weather (speed 40-45 kmph gusting to 55 kmph) very likely over Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Andaman Sea

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	30.0	14.9	Kozhikode	—	34.2	25.6
Ahmedabad	—	30.6	13.8	Kurnool	—	33.5	21.2
Aizawl	—	—	12.1	Lucknow	—	26.2	12.4
Allahabad	—	27.3	11.8	Madurai	2.0	31.7	22.7
Bengaluru	—	29.0	19.5	Mangaluru	—	33.1	24.5
Bhopal	—	—	13.4	Mumbai	—	31.8	24.0
Bhubaneswar	—	29.8	18.1	Mysuru	—	30.2	20.0
Chandigarh	—	26.2	10.3	New Delhi	—	26.8	8.8
Chennai	—	30.8	25.2	Patna	—	25.8	11.0
Coimbatore	0.1	31.2	22.6	Port Blair	—	31.6	26.2
Dehradun	—	25.3	10.4	Puducherry	40.3	30.4	22.0
Gangtok	—	17.1	9.5	Pune	—	30.9	19.7
Goa	—	33.8	24.1	Raipur	—	30.5	14.0
Guwahati	—	29.0	14.6	Ranchi	—	26.2	12.1
Hubballi	—	31.0	19.0	Shillong	—	21.1	9.5
Hyderabad	—	30.2	21.0	Shimla	—	16.2	7.1
Imphal	—	27.9	12.9	Srinagar	—	12.2	-2.2
Jaipur	—	25.7	11.0	Thiruvananthapuram	0.2	30.8	24.0
Kochi	19.0	30.8	23.8	Tiruchi	1.0	31.5	23.8
Kohima	—	—	7.8	Vijayawada	—	30.8	23.6
Kolkata	—	27.6	16.8	Visakhapatnam	—	30.2	24.1

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.25	..86	30	 55	94	
Bengaluru	...8	..42	22	... 104	.....—	
Chennai	.27	..47	40	 98	82	
Delhi	.13	..84	.—	... 446	...393	
Hyderabad	...2	..41	45	... 163	...147	
Kolkata	.18	..17	51	... 323	...179	
Lucknow	.10	..63	93	... 260	...219	
Mumbai	.74	155	40	... 380	...268	
Pune	..—	..—	.—	..... —	.....—	
Visakhapatnam	.35	..31	41	... 250	...150	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Purnia, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 423 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Back-room parleys on in Kerala to break impasse on Vizhinjam project issue

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Though the Kerala government is favourable to deploying Central forces at the construction site of the Vizhinjam International Seaport port, efforts are on to find an amicable solution to the Vizhinjam issue through a series of back-room negotiations.

CPI(M) Thiruvananthapuram district secretary Anavoor Nagappan on Sunday visited Thomas J. Netto, Archbishop of the Latin Archdiocese of Thiruvananthapuram.

Even as speculation about a possible thaw in a frozen relationship between protesters and the State government is doing the rounds, a circular read out in the churches under the Latin Archdiocese, Thiruvananthapuram, on Sunday has some signs of soothing the frayed nerves with the circular softening its aggressive language and climbing down from its previous adamant positions.

The circular explaining the circumstances that led to the violence blamed the provocations of some for the violent incidents.

The circular said it is not necessary to stop the port permanently, but the construction works have to be stopped to hold a study on the impact of the port project on the coastline.

Police will handle the situation outside site in Vizhinjam: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The Kerala Police are capable of handling law and order problems outside the work site for the proposed Vizhinjam International Trans-shipment Terminal project, State Minister for Ports Ahammad Devarkovil said on Sunday.

He said that it was not the State government, but the construction company, which had approached the Kerala High Court seeking the help of Central forces at the project site.

"The company has arranged a lot many equipment and vehicles there. They can't be blamed if they seek protection for such properties within the work site," he said.

Mr. Devarkovil pointed out that law and order problems, however, were likely to occur outside the project site. Enough police force had been deployed there to take care of that, he added.

Future of education in the digital age

What will education be like in the digital age? This was the focus of the enlightED conference that took place in Spain recently.

Archana Subramanian
(archana.subramanian@thehindu.co.in)

On November 16 and 17, the fifth edition of the enlightED took place in Spain with panellists talking about the future of education in the digital age. The conference, organised by Fundación Telefónica, IE University, and South Summit and supported by La Caixa Foundation, returned to a physical format after two years of the pandemic. Begun in 2018, the event brings together experts in education, technology and innovation to reflect on the challenges in the field of learning.

This year, the three main themes were digital skills of today and tomorrow; disruptive classrooms; and advancing equity and inclusion through innovation. Speakers included names such as renowned psychologist Susan David; Bisila Bokoko, founder of African Literacy Project; Ousman Umar, founder of Nasco Feeding Minds; Dr. Alok Kanojia, co-founder of Healthy Gamer; and Kenneth Cukier, an authority on emerging technology.

Highlights

After the opening led by Carmen Morenés, CEO of Fundación Telefónica; Santiago Iñiguez, President of IE University; Liz Fleming, Director of Ecosystems at South Summit; and Xavier Bertolín, Corporate Director of Education and Marketing at la Caixa Foundation, the first session had Ikhlaq Sidhu, Dean of IE School of Science & Technology; and Kenneth Cukier, best-selling author speaking about the Future of Edtech. While

Ousman Omar and Magdalena Brier, CEO of ProFuturo spoke about the need to bring digitisation to underdeveloped communities and end inequalities by empowering younger generations, Bisila Bokoko, the founder and CEO of BBES, and Liz Fleming, Director of Ecosystems at South Summit, reflected upon how social entrepreneurship can promote inclusion and the need to identify new areas for development within a start-up ecosystem.

enlightED 2022 also featured Desafio, a 24-hour immersive experience at the headquarters of 42 Madrid, which offered insights into its disruptive teaching methodology and the possibilities it offers to make students industry ready. Since there are no physical classrooms or books, the students work with their peers and draw insights from each other's experiences.

On the second day, psychiatrist and founder of Healthy Gamer Dr. Alok Kanojia spoke about the impact of technology on mental health in a co+nversation with María Zabala, journalist, writer and communication consultant specialising in technology and digital society. In a session on Digital Skills for Today and Tomorrow led by Luis Miguel Olivas, director of the Employability and Educational Innovation Area of Fundación Telefónica and featuring María Lillstrom, project manager of Astrazeneca, Joao Amaral, director of Development of Sonae and Marco Dondei, an expert in the future of work, the panellists touched upon the relevance of technology and its impact on education and the future of work.

In another session about Evidence-based Education: Keys to Reducing Educational Inequity, Marta Ferrero, Vice-Dean in Research and Teaching Transfer at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at UAM; and Kim Bohling, head of Evaluation at the Education Endowment Foundation, spoke about the need to evaluate and understand different aspects of learning such as class size, socio-economic status, and countries of birth, and the combined need for critical thinking and openness to learn newer things.

Spain's Minister of Education and Training Pilar Alegría participated in the closing ceremony along with José María Álvarez Pallete, Chairman of Telefónica; Diego del Alcázar, CEO of IE University; Liz Fleming, Director of Ecosystems at South Summit; and Xavier Bertolín, Corporate Director of Education and Marketing at la Caixa Foundation.

"When such disruptive changes occur in short periods of time, there is a risk of inequality. There is no more powerful tool than education and training to ensure social inclusion, reduce inequalities and boost countries' competitiveness," concluded Álvarez Pallete.

(Clockwise from left) A panel on Fostering STEAM Vocations and Skills; At a VR stall for experiential learning; A session on Reframing Virtual Learning; Dr. Alok Kanojia on technology and gaming.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The reporter was at the conference on the invitation of IE University, Spain.

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A small uptick

GST collections show consumers have been cautious about festive spending

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues grew almost 11% this November to nearly ₹1.46 lakh crore. While this is only the tenth such occasion since the onset of the GST in July 2017 that revenues have been over ₹1.4 lakh crore, that mark has been consistently topped for nine months now. The two highest GST monthly receipts so far – over ₹1.67 lakh crore in April and ₹1.51 lakh crore in October – were partly bolstered by taxpayers filing quarterly returns. Discounting periodic spikes in compliance, one can possibly peg the ₹1.4 lakh crore as the new normal baseline for monthly GST revenues hereon. With almost ₹12 lakh crore already in the GST kitty this year, the Government is likely to end up with a not-insignificant surplus over its Budget. This is welcome fiscal headroom, especially since the Centre's subsidy bill on items such as fertilizers and foodgrains has also surpassed the Budget math, and may help the Government stick to its fiscal deficit target. On the flip side, however, November's GST revenues are not an enthusing indicator about the state of the broader economy.

The 10.9% overall GST revenue growth in November, reflecting transactions undertaken in October when the major festivals, including Deepavali, occurred – is the slowest uptick recorded since June 2021. November revenues were the lowest in three months and marked a nearly 4% dip from October's kitty. E-way bills generation, broadly indicating outflow of goods from producers to the wholesale and retail supply chains, dropped a steeper 8.6% sequentially, perhaps as factories recorded higher downtimes amid extended holidays. One would have expected festive consumption to spike the GST intake despite the e-way bills decline, as inventories were already built up in anticipation. That effect appears muted and it is quite puzzling that revenues contracted year-on-year in as many as seven States, including Gujarat and Kerala. Growth in inflows from domestic transactions slowed from 18% in October to 8% last month, while revenues from imports of goods rose to 20% in November – a possible sign that the consumption recovery remains uneven, with goods consumed by higher income groups seeing a better rebound. December's post-festival GST collections could yield a clearer picture, both on the sustainability of the headline revenue numbers and the growth trajectory of the economy. The GST Council, meeting this month after another prolonged gap, must expedite long-awaited action on pending issues to bolster compliance, and not lose sight of the larger, currently-deferred plan to rationalise the tax rates with a view to spur broad-based and sustainable consumption growth.

An unfamiliar trope

African and Asian nations have made giant strides on football's world stage

The FIFA World Cup in Qatar continues to raise a dust of unpredictability. The nerve-wracking dance of fancied teams be it in triumph or defeat and the soul-uplifting flight of the underdog have all shimmered under Qatari skies. Football remains the greatest sport and over a fortnight, the ballet between twirling feet and the ball has caught global attention despite the footprints of a waning pandemic or the devastation of Russia's war against Ukraine. Qatar has managed to host this mega-event with minimal fuss even if whispers of human rights violations during the construction of the various stadiums continue to linger. That sport cannot be oblivious to the circumstances prevailing outside the grounds was emphasised when the Iranian men remained silent during the rendering of the national anthem ahead of their game. This act of solidarity with the women fighting for equal rights back home, comes at a time when many athletes are wary of taking a political stance. The World Cup has come a long way from the inaugural edition in 1930 when host Uruguay emerged as the champion after defeating Argentina. That Uruguay crashed out now while Argentina remains alive, is another pointer to sporting evolution. The trope of South American and European nations being football's bulwarks is also changing.

The African and Asian nations believe that they are here to compete and not make up the numbers. The exposure to the European leagues, the prevalence of a solid grass-roots structure and adequate coaching expertise have all combined to lend bite to the efforts of Morocco, Senegal, Japan and South Korea. The quartet entered the pre-quarterfinals and kept the African and Asian flags flying high. Meanwhile, it is a sobering reality that India has never qualified for the World Cup. Sunil Chhetri's men and the units that succeed them may launch a tilt at football's ultimate championship. The 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico will feature 48 teams, a significant increase from the current 32 and whether India, ranked 106, will qualify through an enhanced Asian quota, remains to be seen. But for now in a World Cup with its focus on Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and an injured Neymar, maximum thrills have emerged from Asian and African boots. Even if Cameroon did not qualify, it defeated Brazil, as did Saudi Arabia which dished out a similar fate to Argentina during the initial phase. South Korea's incredible 2-1 win over Portugal just as the group stage concluded is the perfect interlude as the World Cup's business-end begins.

New faces in Nepal's politics, a phase of change

On November 20, Nepal had its general elections, its second since the promulgation of the Nepal Constitution of 2015. This was also the first time in Nepal's history that a parliament had completed a five-year tenure even though legislative activities were conducted for barely 18 months. The last elections saw communist forces uniting and sweeping the elections and relegating the Nepali Congress to a quiet opposition. There was no end to intra-party squabbles, which are a key feature of Nepali politics, and there was a split in the ruling party. What followed next were attempts to dissolve Parliament twice, but only to be reinstated by the Supreme Court. The President also became very active by becoming a part of the push for a dissolution of Parliament as well as not approving a citizenship bill.

The November 2022 parliamentary elections saw an awkward pre-poll alliance between the ruling coalition of Nepali Congress and the two communist parties that had split from the main Nepal Communist Party, i.e., the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Socialist). The alliance was awkward as it was during the Maoist insurgency that some of the biggest killings took place (when Sher Bahadur Deuba was the Prime Minister); the Maoist killed a large number of Nepali Congress cadres. The other pre-poll alliance was led by Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and comprised the Janata Samajwadi Party (a splinter group of the multiple combinations of the Madhesi parties) and the royalist Hindu nationalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP).

Nepal's Parliament has 275 seats, with 165 under direct election from the First Past the Post (FPTP) and 110 through Proportional Representation (PR), for which each party submits a list prior to the elections. Voting is by using two separate ballot papers – voting for the candidate and then voting for the party. Now, 61% of the eligible 17,988,57 voters voted for the elections.

Sujeev Shakya

is the author of the books, 'Unleashing Nepal' and 'Unleashing The Vajra'

Making way for the new

The NC has won the largest number of seats, thus improving its tally when compared to last year – 86 seats now as compared to 63 seats in the last elections. The UML, which had won 121 seats in the last elections, could manage only 78 seats this time. The Maoist Centre that had 53 seats in the last Parliament had to be content with 31. The CPN-US which split from the UML is struggling to get the status of a national party as it has yet to bag 3% of the national votes required to be a national party and get nominations from the PR list. The CPN-US had 31 seats when it split from CPN-UML and is now down to 10.

The Royalist RPP won 14 seats, up from just one seat in Parliament, which is also an indication of the rise of right-wing politics in Nepal. The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) a party that was just registered five months ago, in July, and led by a television anchor Rabi Lamichhane, could get young independent candidates winspired by the wins of young independent politicians during the local elections held in May 2022. They managed to create an impact by winning 21 seats. Similarly, in the Terai, the Nepal Janamat Party led by C.K. Raut won just one seat directly but got four more seats, getting the status of a national party. Similarly, a new party in western Nepal, the Nagarik Unmukti Party, won three seats. One of the biggest outcomes of this year's election is about how the Madhesi parties have lost their stronghold in the Terai, giving way to either new parties or the existing main parties.

> With changes in Nepal's Parliament, India and the rest of the international community will have to be recalibrating their ways of dealing with Kathmandu

The clear message

There are four messages. First, people were tired of the same faces that have been ruling Nepal in an arrangement akin to playing musical chairs, creating a coalition of convenience. They were willing to experiment with new set of leaders from existing parties as well as new parties.

Second, the independents have had a huge impact as people realised that elections could be fought on a shoe-string budget if one was a good communicator. They raised very simple issues of governance, tackling corruption, fighting privileges and just doing their job. The mascot for these independents was the Mayor of Kathmandu and Dharan, both independents trying to get a lot of work done.

Third, people did not agree fully on the coalition formula. They did not want to vote for the rival parties they were voting against for decades. For example, how could an NC cadre whose family had been killed by Maoists during the insurgency vote for the CPN-Maoist? For those who voted for their own party candidate in the direct polls PR decided to go with the independent party in PR voting as they did not like the way the PR lists were drawn up by their parties.

Fourth, Nepal does not allow people living outside the country to vote as all political parties have ben against allowing postal ballots. This time, people living outside Nepal pushed their family members to vote for independents and the RPP probably influenced by watching new and fireband leaders speaking on social media platforms.

What New Delhi must note

So, what does this mean for India? For New Delhi, it would be dealing with a new situation: of having to deal with a new set of faces after decades. This is a new generation of young Nepalis who see a world beyond India. They have been educated or worked outside the subcontinent. They are digitally connected to different parts of the globe For them, India is just another country.

India has always relied on its intelligence agencies or retired diplomats to be the interlocutors when it came to having reliable contacts in Nepal or understanding perspectives about Nepal. There is also a media gap; most media houses do not have a permanent correspondent in Nepal. And, social media has disrupted how information is created or consumed.

In a country where 70% of the population is under 40 years with 50% under 25 years, memories of the blockade still remain and has resulted in the alienation of an entire generation of Nepalis. For some people educated outside Nepal and who have returned, they cannot understand why India behaves in a certain way like when the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) report was debunked. Many of them who asked these questions are now in Parliament. They have also questioned the MCC grant and the different engagements by development partners in Nepal. India and the rest of the international community will have to be recalibrating their ways of dealing with Nepal.

Therefore, more engagement will be required to understand the new set of people, who are of course led by the old set. It will be also important to create a conducive environment for the exchange of ideas and people and set the stage for the next steps in relationship building.

Poor soil management will erode food security

Healthy soils are essential for our survival. They support healthy plant growth to enhance both our nutrition and water percolation to maintain groundwater levels. Soils help to regulate the planet's climate by storing carbon and are the second largest carbon sink after the oceans. They help maintain a landscape that is more resilient to the impacts of droughts and floods. As soil is the basis of food systems, it is no surprise that soil health is critical for healthy food production.

World Soil Day (WSD) 2022, annually observed on December 5, aligns with this. WSD 2022, with its guiding theme, 'Soils: Where food begins', is a means to raise awareness on the importance of maintaining healthy soils, ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, encouraging societies to improve soil health, and advocating the sustainable management of soil.

Konda Reddy Chavva

is Officer-in-Charge, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representation in India

Degradation and its consequences

Today, nutrient loss and pollution significantly threaten soils, and thereby undermine nutrition and food security globally. The main drivers contributing to soil degradation are industrial activities, mining, waste treatment, agriculture, fossil fuel extraction and processing and transport emissions. The reasons behind soil nutrient loss range from soil erosion, runoff, leaching and the burning of crop residues. Soil degradation in some form or another affects around 29% of India's total land area. This in turn threatens agricultural productivity, in-situ biodiversity conservation, water quality and the socio-economic well-being of land dependent communities.

Nearly 3.7 million hectares suffer from nutrient loss in soil (depletion of soil organic matter, or SOM). Further, excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, and irrigation with contaminated wastewater are also polluting soils. Impacts of soil degradation are far reaching and can have irreparable consequences on human and ecosystem health.

> Soil degradation can have irreparable consequences on human and ecosystem health, which cannot be ignored

India's conservation strategy

The Government of India is implementing a five-pronged strategy for soil conservation. This includes making soil chemical-free, saving soil biodiversity, enhancing SOM, maintaining soil moisture, mitigating soil degradation and preventing soil erosion. Earlier, farmers lacked information relating to soil type, soil deficiency and soil moisture content. To address these issues, the Government of India launched the Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme in 2015. The SHC is used to assess the current status of soil health, and when used over time, to determine changes in soil health. The SHC displays soil health indicators and associated descriptive terms, which guide farmers to make necessary soil amendments.

Other pertinent initiatives include the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, to prevent soil erosion, regeneration of natural vegetation, rainwater harvesting and recharging of the groundwater table.

In addition, the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) has schemes promoting traditional indigenous practices such as organic farming and natural farming, thereby reducing dependency on chemicals and other agri-inputs, and decreasing the monetary burden on smallholder farmers.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) undertakes multiple activities to support the Government of India's efforts in soil conservation towards fostering sustainable agrifood systems. The FAO is collaborating with the National Rainfed Area Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) to develop forecasting tools using data analytics that will aid vulnerable farmers in making informed decisions on crop choices, particularly in rainfed areas.

Working with target States

The FAO, in association with the Ministry of Rural Development, supports the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission's (DAY-NRLM) Community Resource Persons to increase their capacities towards supporting on-farm livelihoods for the adoption of sustainable and resilient practices, organic certification and agri-nutri-gardens. The FAO works in eight target States, namely, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Punjab, for boosting crop diversification and landscape-level planning. In Andhra Pradesh, the FAO is partnering with the State government and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to support farmers in sustainable transitions to agro-ecological approaches and organic farming.

There is a need to strengthen communication channels between academia, policymakers and society for the identification, management and restoration of degraded soils, as well as in the adoption of anticipatory measures. These will facilitate the dissemination of timely and evidence-based information to all relevant stakeholders. Greater cooperation and partnerships are central to ensure the availability of knowledge, sharing of successful practices, and universal access to clean and sustainable technologies, leaving no one behind. As consumers and citizens, we can contribute by planting trees to protect topsoil, developing and maintaining home/kitchen gardens, and consuming foods that are mainly locally sourced and seasonal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Electoral bond sales

Corporates donating to political parties can only promote crony capitalism and not democracy (Page 1, December 4). The reason is simple: most of the donations ultimately end up having an element of *quid pro quo* even if it was not visible at the time the money was donated. Therefore, one fails to understand in what way the Electoral Bond Scheme has cleansed the earlier system of political funding. If anything, the opacity surrounding the bonds has made it near impossible for the public to know which corporate gave what amount, and to which political party. But, one must concede the genius of the architect of the Electoral Bond Scheme even if it was used for the wrong ends. By keeping the door open for all political parties to receive donations from corporates, opposition to the scheme has been blunted while at the same time, the national party has expectedly continued to get the largest share of the pie under the scheme.

G.G. Menon,
Tripunithura, Ernakulam, Kerala

While the Electoral Bonds case is moving at a snail's pace in the Supreme Court, the Government is busy opening more windows for electoral bond sales to mop up more funds. One has to comment on the way in which the whole exercise has been drawn up. It is almost certainly favouring the ruling dispensation in terms of garnering more funds than the combined share of the other parties in the fray (thus denying them a level-playing field). It also negates the question of transparency in political funding by the donors that has been given a go by notwithstanding the loud proclamations to the contrary. In the end, it raises the question about where the country is being led to.

V. Padmanabhan,
Bengaluru

Teasing an elephant

December 4 was World Wildlife Conservation Day and there were a number of media articles on both the plight of wildlife as well as some success stories ('FAQ' page, December 4).

I am writing about the first, namely to highlight the plight of the Asian elephant in many parts of India.

A search on YouTube, more precisely with the words "Elephant and tea garden" or "Elephant chasing boys" will show up a number of disturbing and distressing clips of people teasing and attempting to cause harm and hurt to the giant animal in the Northeast, especially the tea gardens of Assam, and also in the High Ranges in the Western Ghats.

Videos of youngsters running behind an elephant or even a herd of elephants and tourists indulging in unruly behaviour to upset the animal or animals highlight what seems to be a favourite game for many. There are also many YouTubers highlighting undiscovered spots in India's jungles, which only increases the potential for a tourist invasion and setting up man-animal conflicts.

I wonder whether the authorities and the Forest Department officials are aware of this.

Kushal Mandanna,
Madikeri, Coorg

Surprises in Qatar

The stunning victories by Japan, South Korea, Morocco, Senegal and Saudi Arabia over the European and South American behemoths in FIFA 2022 herald a new beginning. The underdogs have displayed extraordinary grit and determination.

One can expect more surprises.

M. Jeyaram,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

From a vicious cycle to a virtuous cycle

Irfan Nooruddin

is the Senior Director of the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center and the Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Indian Politics in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University

The economic impact of the pandemic spared few, but there is now evidence that those in the informal sector faced especially devastating consequences. A key reason was the challenge of raising capital. India's formal credit system is inhospitable to informal sector workers and micro-entrepreneurs – they cannot even get a small personal loan to tide over cash flow issues in their businesses because they lack the papers and the collateral usually required for admission to the formal credit market. Why should it be so? Bankers would say the working poor are not good credit risks and lack the behaviour and aptitude associated with successful repayment outcomes. Unfortunately, this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Unable to borrow, the working poor cannot establish a credit history, or learn how to manage their debts, and invest the loan in productive expenditures that would bolster their earnings and allow them to make their EMI payments on time. They are excluded from the formal credit economy. Banks are denied potentially good customers and the economy is denied their entrepreneurial energies.

A returnable grant

Systematic evaluation of a pioneering new blended finance instrument called a returnable grant (RG) suggests we can break this vicious cycle of financial exclusion. Developed as part of the Revive Initiative by Samhita Social Ventures and Collective Good Foundation (CGF), and supported by philanthropic funding, the RG concept is simple and innovative. Recipients receive a 'grant', with ticket sizes tailored to their needs (typically under ₹10,000). But unlike conventional grants, there is an expectation to return (or repay) the grant, either in a lump sum or in EMIs over a pre-agreed time period. Beneficiaries are told that timely return of the grant will allow Samhita-CGF to support other workers like themselves, and that additional benefits, such as interest-rate subsidies or access to skilling and insurance products, may be forthcoming for them. The grants are disbursed in partnership with local civil society organisations that have prior relationships with the beneficiaries. Started in 2020, the RG programme has grown to reach more than 1,00,000 beneficiaries across over 50 unique cohorts. Samhita-CGF invested in a rigorous evaluation framework that utilised third-party survey organisations to collect baseline, midline, and endline data on individual recipients. Analysis of the data provide valuable insights about how we can serve the financially marginalised better.

Findings

The most striking finding is that the average repayment rate is high. Of the 13,000 participants who have either completed their repayment or are close to doing so, 60% made their payments on time, yielding a capital recovery rate of 72%. These repaid funds have been 'revolved' to new beneficiaries, resulting in a multiplier effect of 3X on the initial philanthropic investments.

Recall that there was no legal obligation to repay and since it was interest-free, there were no financial penalties either. Yet, not only did the RG recipients repay at a high rate but also used the funds to invest in their economic futures. For instance, a cohort of 'beautypreneurs' reported using the funds to continue to purchase supplies so they could provide service at homes when parlours were locked due to COVID-19 regulations. Artisans used the funds to buy material and keep up production even when global value chains paused their orders. This allowed them to service their contractors as soon as the lockdown was lifted. These findings are seen across cohorts; across gender, age, income and educational categories; and in urban and rural localities.

The programme's success provides insights for scale and replication. First, it is critical to work with implementation partners which have long-term relationships and are deeply embedded in the communities being served. Those with strong financial expertise understandably fare better at managing the returnable grants and at securing timely repayment. Second, working with partners willing to make regular calls to beneficiaries to check on their progress and provide timely reminders of their repayment obligations yields measurable benefit. Relatedly, providing flexible and customised repayment options are key to maintaining high repayment rates. People want to do the right thing; they just need a helping hand.

The RG innovation spawned other innovations. For instance, an RG-as-voucher spin-off provided recipients from a farmer cohort with vouchers they could redeem for fertilizers and equipment. Other cohorts were offered subsidised interest-bearing loans. Timely repayment was rewarded with interest reductions.

The RG experience could create a 'graduation' pathway to formal credit for informal sector workers and entrepreneurs. The repayment data from the RG can be used to create a 'pre-credit score', which banks could use to make a 'starter loan' to these borrowers. An ideal pre-credit score would be a document-less, surrogate-driven but triangulated methodology which attempts to build statistically validated default indicators that lending institutions could use to assess 'new-to-credit' cohorts. These starter loans could be supported by credit guarantees or interest subvention, using philanthropic funding, in order to incentivise banks to get started. The repayment track record of these starter loans could feed into a formal credit score, essentially opening the door to mainstream formal credit in subsequent cycles.

A pioneering new blended finance programme could create a 'graduation' pathway to formal credit for informal sector workers and entrepreneurs

Power consumers hit a snag

The exercise to link Aadhaar details with service numbers has generated heat

STATE OF PLAY

T. Ramakrishnan
ramakrishnan.t@thehindu.co.in

Only a few months ago, Tamil Nadu had increased the tariff for a host of electricity consumers. Now, domestic consumers along with consumers from a few other categories have been asked to link their Aadhaar details with their service connection numbers. On the face of it, the process should not have caused any problem, given that the State, over five years ago, had instructed people to link their ration card details with their Aadhaar numbers. But the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO)'s latest move has generated much heat.

It all began in mid-November when sections of consumers, who had to pay their bimonthly bills, complained that they could make their payment only once they furnished their Aadhaar details. This came as a surprise as TANGEDCO has made no announcement about linking service connection numbers with Aadhaar numbers, though on October 6, the State Energy Department had issued an order saying that those who want to avail themselves of the subsidy should link their Aadhaar numbers with their service connection numbers. For the time being, the drive covers nearly 2.3 crore domestic connections, 22.85 lakh farm connections, 10.6 lakh huts and 1.6 lakh power looms, even though the order includes places of public worship (1.52 lakh) and handlooms (74,500) too.

When consumers began complaining that there were hitches in completing the process, the authorities responded by extending the last date for payment by two days. When the problems persisted, Electricity Minister V. Senthil Balaji announced on November 26 that the payment of power bills could be done even without linking service connection numbers with Aadhaar. He said special camps to link Aadhaar with service connection numbers would be held from November 28 to December 31 and consumers could pay their bills without any hassle until then.

Conscious of complaints regarding the process of Aadhaar linking that involved the uploading of images of the Aadhaar cards, the power utility removed that requirement. Instead, it wants consumers to provide their service connection numbers and Aadhaar-linked mobile numbers. The TANGEDCO chief, Rajesh Lakhoni, tweeted that an online portal in cloud had been deployed for linking Aadhaar with service connection numbers. Still, there are reports of consumers encountering difficulties. As on December 2, the Aadhaar numbers of nearly 47.2 lakh connections were furnished.

While leaders such as the AIADMK's deposed coordinator, O. Panneerselvam, and the BJP's State president, K. Annamalai, have said that consumers should be given more time, CPI(M) leader K. Balakrishnan questioned the need to link Aadhaar with service connection numbers. He said the decision has "created a lot of fear among the general public and especially among the people living on rent." Mr. Panneerselvam recalled how M.K. Stalin, as the Leader of the Opposition, had opposed the announcement that subsidy for cooking gas cylinders would be stopped for those who did not give Aadhaar details.

The Electricity Minister cited the Central government's stipulation as the reason for the move. He said the move would help determine the precise number of domestic consumers and other categories of consumers. The Energy Department's order has invoked the relevant section of the law on Aadhaar which deals with proof of the Aadhaar number as being necessary for receipt of certain subsidies, benefits and services.

As the process triggered talks that the government would eventually rollback the present concession of 100 units free to domestic consumers, Mr. Senthil Balaji was forced to reiterate that there would not be any withdrawal of concession, regardless of the number of connections a consumer possessed.

What cannot be overlooked is that huts and farms too have been enjoying free power supply, longer than those in the domestic category. While consumers feel that the process of updating the database should have been an ongoing and continuous exercise without any deadline, officials say that unless there is "pressure," consumers may not take the issue seriously. If there is a helpline, it may assuage some of these concerns.

India tops index on social hostilities relating to religion

It ranked relatively low in the Government Restrictions Index, but high on social hostility involving religion, especially in the first year of the pandemic

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In the early days of the pandemic, the Tablighi Jamaat, a little-known Islamic organisation, found itself in the middle of a controversy in India after many of its patrons who attended a religious congregation tested positive for COVID-19. Those who got infected were referred to by many as the 'Nizamuddin cluster' and were blamed for "importing" COVID-19 into India. Social media was awash with comments and memes insinuating that the group's members had planned the event. Many members of the Jamaat were charged with disobeying an order promulgated by a public servant and arrested.

The impact of this move was felt even in places as far away as Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Director General of Police informed the Madras High Court in July that 159 cases had been booked against 356 people across Tamil Nadu for spreading fake news, bigotry and communal hatred against Muslims by linking them to COVID-19.

Notably, in parallel, the Central government began planning for the Maha Kumbh Mela, scheduled for January 2021. According to government data, 9.1 million pilgrims took part in the event between January 14 and April 27, 2021.

In a report titled 'How COVID-19 restrictions affected religious groups around the world in 2020,' compiled by the Pew Research Center, India has been ranked first in the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) which measures acts of religious hostility by private individuals, organisations or groups in society. The higher the rank, the higher the hostility. This index includes religion-related armed conflict or terrorism, mob or sectarian violence, harassment over attire for religious reasons, and other forms of religion-related intimidation or abuse. The SHI uses 13 indicators to measure social hostilities. This was the 13th edition of the Pew survey, which started in 2007.

India ranked relatively low (33 out of 198 countries) in the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) which measures government laws, policies and actions that restrict religious beliefs and practices. The higher the rank, the higher the restrictions. The GRI comprises 20 measures of restrictions, including efforts by the government to ban particular faiths, prohibit conversion, limit preaching or give preferential treatment to one or more religious groups. China topped this category.

Chart 1 plots the SHI against the GRI for 198 countries in 2020. Each dot corresponds to a country. The higher the dot, the higher the country's rank on the SHI. The further to the right, the higher the country's rank on the GRI.

Table 2 shows the SHI score of select countries in 2007, 2019 and 2020. The countries with relatively high scores in at least one of the years have been listed. India, with a score of 9.4 out of a possible 10, leads the list. It is also among the few countries which recorded consistent increases in the SHI in these years. Its SHI score rose from 8.8 to 9.1 between 2007 and 2019 and then increased to 9.4 in 2020, the year the first pandemic case was reported in India.

In countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh, while the SHI reduced between 2007 and 2019, it increased during the pandemic year. In the Philippines, it increased between 2007 and 2019 and decreased during the pandemic year. In Pakistan, it consistently decreased in the considered periods.

Table 3 shows India's score on the 13 indicators which were considered to measure the SHI. The scores range from 0 to 1, with 0 corresponding to the least hostility and 1 to the highest hostility. Across all the years considered, India recorded the highest possible score, on most indicators.

Hostility during a pandemic

The data are sourced from the report titled "How COVID-19 restrictions affected religious groups around the world in 2020," compiled by the Pew Research Center

Chart 1: The chart plots SHI against GHI for 198 countries in 2020

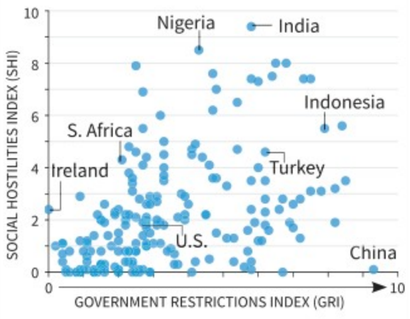

Table 2: The table shows the SHI score of select countries in 2007, 2019 and 2020

Nations	2007	2019	2020
India	8.8	9.1	9.4
France	3.4	3.5	4.7
Egypt	6.1	6.5	7.4
Nigeria	4.4	8.4	8.5
Afghanistan	8.5	5.6	8
Bangladesh	8.3	6.7	7
Mexico	5.5	4.5	5
Indonesia	8.3	4.8	5.5
Iran	6	1.5	1.9
Sudan	6.5	2	2.4
Ghana	4.9	1.8	2.6
Philippines	3.7	4.9	4.8
Libya	1.4	7.7	7.4
Ethiopia	5.3	5.9	4.5
Brunei	4.2	1.3	1.3
Pakistan	8.9	8.1	7.5
Iraq	10	7.7	7.3
Yemen	6.2	5.1	3.5

Table 3: The table shows India's score in the 13 indicators considered to measure SHI. The scores range from 0 to 1; 0=least hostility, 1=highest hostility

Question	2007	2019	2020	Relative rank
Were there violent crimes or malicious acts motivated by religious hatred or bias?	1	0.86	1	3 nations out of 198 countries had a score of 1 in 2020
Was there mob violence related to religion?	1	1	1	13 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were there acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups?	1	1	1	13 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were religion-related terrorist groups active in the country?	1	1	1	22 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Was there a religion-related war or armed conflict in the country?	0.5	0.5	0.25	15 of 198 had a score of >=0.25 in 2020
Did violence result from tensions between religious groups?	1	1	1	27 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Did groups use force to control public life, including preventing religious groups from operating?	1	1	1	59 countries out of 198 nations had a score of 1 in 2020
Did religious groups themselves attempt to prevent other religious groups from operating?	1	1	1	55 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Did individuals or groups use violence/threat of violence to enforce religious norms?	1	1	1	71 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were individuals assaulted/ displaced from homes in retaliation for religious activities, considered offensive to the majority faith?	1	1	1	51 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were women harassed for violating religious dress codes?	0	1	1	60 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were there incidents of hostility over proselytizing?	1	0.5	1	11 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020
Were there incidents of hostility over religious conversions?	1	1	1	25 of 198 had a score of 1 in 2020

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 5, 1972

Speaker suggests yoga centres for MPs

New Delhi, Dec. 4: Members received with laughter in the Lok Sabha to-day a suggestion by the Union Health Minister, Mr. Uma Shankar Dikshit, that they should take to 'Pranayam' and other Yogic exercises. Mr. Dikshit, who was replying to questions relating to heart diseases, said he was making the suggestion in all seriousness. His Ministry would make the necessary arrangements to open Vyayam and Yoga centres for M.P.s if they were interested. The Speaker, Mr. G.S. Dhillon, said the Minister's suggestion was very good. "Please go ahead with the arrangement, we are all ready for it," he said and added, "the Ministers also should attend it." The athletic-looking Mr. H.C. Kahwai, Jan Sangh member from Madhya Pradesh, showed interest in the proposal. The Speaker remarked: "Something should be done to change the temperament of members also."

Members had focused attention on themselves, while putting supplementaries on a question from Mr. B.K. Daschowdhury about the steps taken by the Central Government to have coronary care units in Delhi's hospitals. Mr. Dikshit promised to consider suggestions for strengthening the arrangements for treating coronary diseases but said "we must first take more care of the poor man's diseases" than ailments which affected a smaller number of people. It was a phenomenon seen all over the world that due to the stress and strain of modern life, coronary diseases were increasing, he said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 5, 1922

Soviet's decision

Reval, Dec. 3: A Moscow message says that at the opening of the Disarmament Conference between Russia and the Border States, Litvinoff read a declaration made by the Soviet Government which expressed its readiness to reduce the Russian army to two hundred thousand men and to dissolve irregular units. Russia was also ready to limit Wuz budgets on a reciprocal basis and to neutralize the zones along Borders. The declaration added that it was impossible for Russia to reduce its Navy. The head of the Polish delegation, Prince Radziwill, who was also acting on behalf of Rumania, expressed his desire for political arrangement as a preliminary to technical discussions.

From Page One

In rare gesture, Iran shuts morality police

Mr. Montazeri's comment came at a religious conference where he responded to a question on "why the morality police were being shut down", the report said. The move represents a rare concession to the protest movement. Authorities have also acknowledged the demoralising effect of an economic crisis spurred by U.S. sanctions. "The best way to confront the riots is to... pay attention to people's real demands," said the parliament presidium council spokesman Seyyed Nezamoldin Mousavi.

'Culture of modesty'

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that overthrew Iran's U.S.-backed monarchy, authorities have monitored adherence to the strict dress code for women as well as men. However, under hardline president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the morality police – known formally as the Gasht-e Ershad or "Guidance Patrol" – was established to "spread the culture of modesty and hijab". The units were set up by Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, which is today headed by President Ebrahim Raisi. They began patrols in 2006 to enforce the dress code which also requires women to wear long clothes and forbids shorts, ripped jeans and other clothes deemed "immodest".

Thousands arrested

More than 300 people have been killed in the unrest, including dozens of security force members, an Iranian general said on Monday. Oslo-based non-government organisation Iran Human Rights last week said at least 448 people had been "killed by security forces in the ongoing nationwide protests". Thousands have been arrested, including prominent Iranian actors and footballers.

Congress to choose new CWC at plenary meet

At a press conference after the meeting, party's general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh particularly pointed out Steering Committee's statement emphasising on "unity". "The Indian National Congress has a critical role to play in finding solutions to these challenges. The Steering Committee calls upon every Congressman and Congresswoman to work with unity, faith, determination, and a sense of collective purpose. The victory of the party will be the victory of every leader and *karyakarta* and a victory for the idea of India that guided our freedom movement and is enshrined in our Constitution," the statement notes.

This is especially significant in the backdrop of the recent unseemly and a very public tug of war between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former Deputy Sachin Pilot.

German Minister arriving in Delhi today

At two meetings with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto in June and October this year, Ms. Baerbock had called on India and Pakistan to follow the "United Nations track" to resolve their disputes, saying that the UN has a "role to play" in ensuring human rights in Jammu and Kashmir, views that the Ministry rejected in a formal statement. However, when asked by *The Hindu* about the comments, Ms. Baerbock did not repeat her references to the UN role. "We believe that the conflict in Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. We encourage both sides to engage in dialogue to resolve their disagreements," Ms. Baerbock said.

'Modi's words on war resounding'

Ms. Baerbock will begin her visit by meeting Mr. Jaishankar on Monday. The Foreign Minister's visit comes ahead of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's travel to India in the "first quarter of 2023" for the biannual India-Germany summit, and New Delhi hopes that he will return to India in September to attend the G-20 summit as well. Ms. Baerbock said the Bali G-20 summit had sent out a "clear message on Russia's aggression against Ukraine", adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words that "today's era is not the era of war" were "resounding".

Drones to supply drugs in Meghalaya

A pilot project was accordingly undertaken and drones were flown on November 26, 2021, from a civil hospital to two primary health centres in the West Khasi Hills district. These centres are among those considered the most difficult to reach. Its success made the State government work on the Jengjal Drone Station, scheduled to be inaugurated by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Monday. Once functional, the drone station is expected to serve as a means of transport for all the rural healthcare facilities within a radius of 50 km.

"Pedaldoba is one of the remotest areas in West Garo Hills. We look forward to the drone delivery system for serving 18,599 people across 55 villages better," a paramedic at the Pedaldoba PHC said. Of the 55 villages, seven are accessible only on foot. The station would cater to the needs of 25 PHCs.

Investigators search for source of ransomware attack on AIIMS servers

System yet to be fully restored as more damage is anticipated if it is linked to the Internet; attackers changed file extensions for all physical servers; over 11,000 computers to be scanned

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Caught off guard: Patients and their relatives waiting outside the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Two weeks after a cyberattack crippled the servers at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), the system has not been completely restored as investigators anticipate more damage if it is linked to the Internet. The file extensions for all the physical servers of AIIMS running on the Linux operating system were changed by the ransomware attackers, a probe has found.

A senior government official told *The Hindu* that to trace the source of the attack, investigators have a huge task of scanning 11,500 computers with a fine-tooth comb as the system will continue to be affected till then.

A first information report (FIR) filed by the Special Cell of Delhi Police, on a complaint filed by an AIIMS security officer, said the hospital had been subjected to a "deliberate" ransomware attack. The FIR stated that one of the officials received three attachments from e-mail users identifying themselves as "dog" and "mouse", seeking a ransom of an unspecified amount. The users asked AIIMS officials that they could send "program and private key" to the IT department of AIIMS to "decrypt the data" and warned the officials not to use third-party software to repair the system as it may lead to permanent data loss.

The FIR added that the "Hospital Information System (HIS) of AIIMS, e-Hospital" provided and managed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) was down and the last transaction had been recorded at 7.07 a.m. on November 23. The HIS pertains to patient records, including line of treatment. As soon as the attack was diagnosed, NIC officials reported the incident on the toll-free number of the Computer Emergency Response System-India (CERT-IN).

Another government official said the source of the attack was yet to be ascertained amid indications that it could have been launched from one of the neighbouring countries.

"Even if it is a ransomware attack, it is not the policy of the government to pay ransoms. Agencies are probing the incident and it [the HIS] will be restored soon," the official said.

The official added that the cybersystem at AIIMS was prone to breach without adequate firewalls and safety features in place.

Afghanistan open for investment by India, say Taliban

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Suhail Shaheen

Afghanistan requires Indian investment, a representative of the Taliban told *The Hindu* on Sunday. Taliban's head of political office Suhail Shaheen said a Taliban delegation had met the head of mission of the Indian Embassy in Kabul and invited its teams to help build and sustain infrastructure projects in the country.

"Afghanistan is open for Indian investment including urban infrastructure. This is the message that the Afghan Minister of Urban Development communicated in a recent meeting with the Indian Charge d'Affaires in Kabul," said Shaheen adding that the Taliban's Minister of Urban Development Hamdullah Nomani and the Indian Charge d'Affaires Bharat Kumar held discussions on investment and various projects.

Nomani is one of the senior-most Taliban leaders and earlier served as the Education Minister of Taliban from 1996 to 2001.

Earlier, several Indian companies were involved in building and maintaining health and electricity infrastructure projects in Afghanistan and these team were evacuated in August 2021 when the Taliban forces took control of the country through a quick military campaign overpowering the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces of President Ashraf Ghani's government.

The relation between the Taliban administration and India has remained undefined as India has not recognised the current set-up in Kabul, though an Indian technical team was sent back to reopen the Embassy of India some months ago.

'Security assured'

Shaheen, however, promised a peaceful working environment for the Indian companies and said, "Security of Indians is our responsibility and we assure them." Over the past two decades, Indian public and private sector entities had invested around $3 billion mainly in the infrastructure sector of the country. The investment was under threat after the return of the Taliban last year.

CJI calls for accessibility audit on SC premises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud has called for a comprehensive accessibility audit of the Supreme Court premises with an aim of ensuring accessibility in the justice system and understanding the hardships faced by specially-abled persons, in their interface with the top court.

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities observed on December 3, the CJI constituted a "Supreme Court Committee on Accessibility" chaired by a sitting judge of the court.

United and forward

Top gear: The Border Security Force (BSF) motorbike team displaying their acrobatic skills during the 58th BSF Raising Day Parade in Amritsar on Sunday. R. V. MOORTHY

Congress leader files complaint against Ajmal

Press Trust of India
GUWAHATI

Congress leader Debabrata Saikia on Sunday lodged a a police complaint against the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) supremo and Lok Sabha member from Assam Badruddin Ajmal over his remarks allegedly targeting the Hindu community.

Mr. Saikia, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly, said Mr. Ajmal's comments had "deliberately caused disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will towards the Hindu population, particularly the Hindu women of India".

The remarks "promoted enmity" between different groups on the grounds of religion, and the situation might aggravate if stringent action was not taken against Mr. Ajmal, Mr. Saikia claimed.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) had already filed complaints against the Dhubri MP in different parts of the State, while the youth wing of the Trinamool Congress had also given a written submission before the police over the issue on Saturday.

Mr. Ajmal, in an interview to a media house on Friday, reportedly advised Hindus to marry young to give birth to more children like Muslims.

Gujarat for revival of provision on conversions

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Gujarat government, buoyed by a recent Supreme Court observation that forcible or fraudulent religious conversion will ultimately affect national security, is pushing for the revival of a provision which requires a District Magistrate's prior permission for converting or "taking part" in a ceremony involving conversion.

The operation of Section 5 and several other key provisions of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003 was stayed by the State High Court in August last year.

Section 5 had required a person taking part, "directly or indirectly", in a "ceremony" involving religious conversion to apply for permission to the District Magistrate concerned. Thereafter, the person who had renounced his/her faith should intimate the District Magistrate. Violations had attracted punishment of imprisonment extending to a year or fine of ₹1,000 or both.

The High Court, in its order, concluded that *prima facie* the 2003 Gujarat Act gave the common man the impression that an inter-faith marriage followed by conversion would amount to an offence.

Later a Supreme Court Bench, led by Justice M.R. Shah, made the remark in a separate public interest litigation petition filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay on November 14 about forcible religious conversion being a "very serious issue which may ultimately affect the security of the nation and violate citizens' right to freedom of conscience and right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion".

On December 3, the Gujarat government filed an affidavit in Mr. Upadhyay's case, complaining that the High Court's stay of Section 5 had even affected "cases where marriage is solemnised by a person of one religion with a person of another religion without force or by allurement or by fraudulent means". That is, even voluntary inter-faith marriages were stymied by the High Court order.

The State said the "exercise of taking prior permission obviates forcible conversion and protects the 'freedom of conscience' guaranteed to all the citizens of the country".

Adani group gets offers for NDTV shares

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has found investors willing to sell over 53 lakh shares of NDTV despite the deep discount to the stock's current trading price, giving it the rights to nominate a chairman of the broadcaster.

The open offer, made after the Adani group acquired a firm that gave it an indirect holding over 29.18% stake in the company, closes on December 5, according to a stock exchange notification.

Against the offer to buy 1.67 crore shares, or 26% of equity – from NDTV's minority investors at a price of ₹294 a piece, Adani group has received offers for 53.27 lakh shares, according to National Stock Exchange data. The offer price of ₹294 per share is a deep discount to the ₹414.40 closing price of NDTV stock on Friday.

Being the largest shareholder would entitle Adani group to appoint at least two directors on the company board including its chairperson, according to market experts.

APPEAL

I am **Meenakshi** (32 years), diagnosed with severe Mitral Stenosis, Moderate MR, Moderate TR and advised to undergo REDO SURGERY/ MITRAL VALVE REPLACEMENT at MIOT International. I have 2 children studying at school and my husband is agriculture cooli. We cannot afford Hospitallisation & Surgery cost of Rs. 3,65,000/-. I seek your generous contribution for my surgery. Donations sent by Ch/D.D favouring **Miot Hospitals Private Limited**, **will be acknowledged**.

The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No. 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** are entitled for exemption under 80G IT. Please give us your email id.

All correspondence is done through **WWS**, Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324.** E-mail ID: **womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.**

Meenakshi

Chaos as names of voters go missing in Delhi civic elections

Muneef Khan
NEW DELHI

A differently-abled voter, Nabia Kasim, shows her ID card in Delhi on Sunday. PTI

Chaos prevailed across the city during the voting for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections, with many electors being unable to find their names on the voter list.

The final turnout, according to the State Election Commission (SEC), stood at 50.47%, which is lower than the 53% registered in 2017.

This was the first civic election in Delhi after the three erstwhile municipal corporations were merged to constitute the unified MCD in May, and the delimitation exercise, which saw a reduction in the total number of wards to 250 from 272.

The Bakhtawarpur ward recorded the highest turnout of 65.74%, while Andrews Ganj registered the lowest of 33.74%.

"No votes cast by voters at three polling stations (Nos. 17, 18, 19) in ward no. 31 (Nangal Thakran) due to reported boycott by the voters of these polling stations on the grounds of non-development activities in their areas by political parties," the SEC said in a statement.

Prominent political faces, including Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar, were among those who were unable to cast vote, as their names were allegedly missing from the list.

Voting began at a snail's pace in the early hours across various polling stations, with only 18% of the 1.45 crore voters showing up to cast their ballot till noon.

In the run-up to the polls, the AAP embarked on a hectic campaign that was centred on the city's three landfills, waste management and other civic issues, which, it alleged, the BJP had ignored during its 15-year term at the civic body. The saffron party responded with allegations of corruption against the AAP government in Delhi.

To keep up the tempo, Congress announces Bharat Jodo follow-up

Haath-se-Haath Jodo will be a nationwide three-tier public engagement programme at the block, district and State levels; it will be conducted for two months from January 26, says party

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Long march: Rahul Gandhi with folk singer Prahlad Singh Tipaniya during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. PTI

As the Bharat Jodo Yatra – a 3,500-km march from Kanniyakumari to Srinagar, led by former Congress president Rahul Gandhi – is set to conclude on Republic Day in 2023, the Congress intends to immediately follow it up with a two-month countrywide intensive public engagement programme, *Haath-se-Haath Jodo*, the party said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference after a meeting of the party's steering committee finalised the new campaign, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said the party reviewed the response it had received for its Bharat Jodo Yatra and decided to keep the momentum going. "As a follow-up to the Bharat JodoYatra, we have decided to hold a massive campaign, *Haath-se-Haath Jodo* [Hand-in-Hand Together] from January 26. This will go on for two months. There will be block-level *padayatras* covering all gram panchayats and booths," he said.

During this campaign, the party will distribute a letter from Mr. Gandhi on the Congress's core message, as well as their "chargesheet" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government since 2014. There will be efforts specially meant to connect with the youth through bike rallies and other engagements, he added.

It will be a three-tier campaign, said Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh. "We will conduct *padayatras* at block and booth level, conferences at the district level and public rallies in the State capitals," he said.

Mr. Ramesh added that the Bharat Jodo Yatra had already crossed seven States, covering a distance of 2,500 km, with another 1,100 km remaining. On Sunday evening, it will enter Rajasthan at Jhalawar, former Chief Minister and BJP leader Vasundhara Raje's home turf.

"The yatra will enter Delhi on December 24. Here, we will halt for four days for some maintenance work. Later, Mr. Gandhi and the yatris will reach Srinagar around January 26, where we will conclude the yatra," he added.

He also pointed out that in the States not covered by the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the party's State units are holding parallel yatras. "On December 15, the State-wide yatra in Assam will end. Between November 19 and 28, a yatra covering all 60 Assembly segments was held in Tripura. Jharkhand also organised a similar yatra, and on December 28, yatra will begin in West Bengal and Bihar. We had to halt the yatra in Odisha temporarily. It will resume there on December 9," Mr. Ramesh noted.

INBRIEF

Hold discussion with Rahul on religion, spirituality: Nath

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath on Sunday asked leaders of the BJP, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to have a discourse on religion and spirituality with Rahul Gandhi, claiming it will prove he has more knowledge on these subjects than them. Talking to reporters in Soyatkalan town of Agar Malwa district on the last day of the Bharat Jodo Yatra's Madhya Pradesh leg before it enters Rajasthan, Mr. Nath said it was a possibility that Mr. Gandhi may embark on another yatra from "east to west" in the country. PTI

Will distribute swords and sticks free, says VHP official

An announcement by an official of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Varanasi to distribute licensed swords along with sticks for free is making headlines. In a post which went viral on social media, Sanjay Hindu Sinha, who claims to be the VHP's Kashi Mahanagar joint-general secretary, said he would give training in kung fu along with licence for swords with sticks at Bal Upasana Kendra near Lohiyanagar. The post which has now been deleted read, "free of cost training of lathi (sticks) for 15 days, knife for one month, swords for one month and kung fu for three months, after which licence of swords with sticks and knife will be given for free.

Rahul, other Cong. leaders likely to skip Winter Session

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress benches will have a lean presence in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament, with the party's former president and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi and other leaders expected to skip the session because of their participation in the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The Winter Session will begin on December 7 and last till December 29. "Bharat Jodo Yatra is under way. It is not practical for Rahul Gandhi to attend the Winter Session of Parliament," Congress MP K. C. Venugopal said at a press conference here.

Many other prominent leaders, including Mr. Venugopal, party's general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh, Rajya Sabha member Digvijay Singh, could miss large parts of the session.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, which began in Kanniyakumari in September, is scheduled to culminate in Srinagar in January.

India's growth and prosperity is linked to the oceans, says Murmu

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Saluting the forces: President Droupadi Murmu receiving the book *A Decade of Transformation* from a marine commando during the Navy Day celebrations in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. V. RAJU

President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday said oceans would play a vital role in India's growth and prosperity with the future linked to the waters, as in the past.

Addressing a large gathering at the Navy Day celebrations here, Ms. Murmu said the Indian Navy, with its role in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh, had earned a permanent place in history and continued to inspire generations.

"We are inherently a maritime nation being surrounded by oceans on three sides. I am confident that the Indian Navy, which is a combat-ready, credible and cohesive force, propelled by innovation, will grow from strength to strength and represent 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in its true spirit."

Calling Visakhapatnam the "jewel of the east coast", Mr. Murmu said the city had emerged as an important hub as the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command (ENC). Expressing happiness to launch various projects virtually, she said that the National Open Air Range (NOAR) in Kurnool district would help in strengthening India's defence sector.

Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, spoke on the Navy's contribution to maritime security and economic development of the nation. "Visakhapatnam has a rich maritime history and the ENC had hosted the Presidential Fleet Review, Milan-2022 and now has the honour of hosting the Navy Day celebrations in the presence of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces," he said.

Navy Day is celebrated to commemorate Operation Trident, an attack on the Karachi harbour during the 1971 war. Admiral Kumar recalled that the *PNS* (Pakistan Naval Submarine) *Ghazi* had sunk outside the Visakhapatnam port during the war.

This year, for the first time, the Navy Day celebrations are being conducted outside the national capital, he said.

93 seats in Gujarat go to the polls in Phase 2 today; Modi, Shah to cast their votes

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Seeking blessings: Narendra Modi meets his mother Hiraba at her residence on the eve of the second phase of Gujarat polls. PTI

In the second phase of the Gujarat Assembly election, voting will be held for 93 seats in 14 districts, including Ahmedabad and Vadodara, across north and central regions on Monday.

More than 2.5 crore people are eligible to vote in Phase 2. As many as 833 candidates are in the fray, including several high-profile leaders such as Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel from Ghatlodia in Ahmedabad. The Congress has fielded Rajya Sabha member Amee Yajnik against the Chief Minister.

Besides, many other heavyweights such as OBC leader Alpesh Thakor, Patidar quota agitation leader Hardik Patel, and Dalit activist Jignesh Mevani are in the fray in the last round of polling. The Election Commission has set up 26,409 booths and nearly 36,000 electronic voting machines (EVMs) will be engaged.

Around 29,000 presiding officers and over 84,000 polling officers have been deployed in 14 districts to facilitate the polling process.

According to Gujarat's Chief Electoral Officer P. Bharathi, of the total 26,409 polling stations, 93 are model booths, 93 are eco-friendly booths, another 93 are managed by Divyang and 14 are managed by youth. Webcasting will be done in 13,319 booths in the second phase.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel will be voting in Ahmedabad at different booths. Mr. Modi is a registered voter from the Ranip area and had cast his vote there in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Mr. Shah will cast his vote at a municipal sub-zonal office in the Naranpura locality of the city.

The first phase polling was held on December 1, while the counting is scheduled for December 8.

For Chief Justice Chandrachud, a trial by fire on his first month

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud, who is completing his first month as the 50th top judge, will head successive combinations of the Supreme Court Collegium responsible for recommending 19 judicial appointments to the top court till his retirement on November 11, 2024, well past the next General Election.

There are already seven judicial vacancies in the top court. Another nine would open up next year. Three more of the current serving judges of the court are scheduled to retire in the final year of the CJI's tenure in 2024.

CJI Chandrachud's 24-month and one-day tenure is the longest for a Chief Justice of India in a decade. The longest the present government has seen.

The last CJI who had a tenure of over two years was the 38th Chief Justice of India, Justice S.H. Kapadia, a little over 28 months, between May 12, 2010, and September 28, 2012. His immediate predecessor, the 37th Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan had a longer tenure of 39 months and 28 days. Such comparatively substantial tenures as Chief Justices of India are few and relatively far in the court's annals.

Besides the length of CJI Chandrachud's tenure which stands him apart from his 11 predecessors starting with the 39th CJI Altamas Kabir, the number and quality of judges the Chandrachud Collegium may recommend could determine the course for constitutional courts in the next decade.

The Chandrachud Collegium may initiate 55.88% of the appointments in the 34-strong court. The new Collegium is also focusing on filling up the High Courts. As on November 1, there were 335 judicial vacancies in the 25 High Courts.

In his maiden month as CJI, the Chandrachud Court has made strong comments about the mechanism for appointment of Election Commissioners. Constitution Benches are at work. Attention is back on contentious issues

D.Y. Chandrachud

such as demonetisation, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and electoral bonds.

Attacks on 'opacity'

With so much ahead, the court has been prodded into the middle of a storm brewed by Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's public attacks on the "opacity" of the Collegium system and his barbed references to the striking down of the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) in 2015.

On November 28, the court expressed its disappointment at somebody so "high" making such remarks. It has made it clear that the government has "crossed some Rubicons" by sitting on Collegium recommendations. It has connected the dots between the NJAC's failure to pass muster in court and the Minister's volley.

The court has also subtly drawn the attention of the government to its power of contempt.

But the same evening saw media reports that the government had returned 20 names recommended by the Collegium for High Court judgeships.

A few days later, somebody as high as Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar, remarked that a law – without specifically naming the NJAC – passed by Parliament and which was the will of the people, was "undone" by the court.

CJI Chandrachud was on the dais.

The Collegium is also facing rough weather from lawyers who have boycotted work over judges' proposed transfers. Chief Justice Chandrachud has called for "balance and harmony" from lawyers. He has urged the government and judiciary to work together rather than find fault with each other.

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TENDER NOTICE

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Disaster Recovery Site for Kerala State Data Centre
(Limited Tender)
Tender ID: **2022_KSITM_519151_2**
Tender Reference No. **SDC/4/2022-KSITM**

Detailed Notification and RFP documents may be downloaded from **https://etenders.kerala.gov.in/**

RO/02952/D3/2022/I&PRD

INBRIEF

Non-essential construction work banned in Delhi-NCR

With pollution in the national capital turning severe on Sunday, the Centre's air quality panel directed authorities in the Delhi-NCR region to ban non-essential construction work in the region under Stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). Delhi's 24-hour average air quality index stood at 407 at 4 p.m. on Sunday. The pollution level in Delhi entered the 'severe' category after November 4, when the AQI was 447. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) directed authorities on November 14 to revoke the curbs enforced in Delhi-NCR under Stage 3 of GRAP, including a ban on non-essential construction activities. PTI

Will not allow 'love jihad' in M.P., says Shivraj Chouhan

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday said that "love jihad" would not be allowed in the State and if need be, a more stringent law against it would be framed. Mr. Chouhan's statement comes days after he announced the formation of a committee for a uniform civil code in the State. "Some people from other religions, if they can't buy tribal land, they marry the daughter of a tribal family just to buy land. This is not love, it is 'jihad' in the name of love, and I will not allow this in Madhya Pradesh. If needed, a stricter law will be made against 'love jihad'," said Mr. Chouhan, bringing up the recent Shraddha murder case in Delhi.

Six killed as truck rams into people in Madhya Pradesh

At least six persons were killed and 10 injured, eight of them critically, when a truck rammed a group of people standing at a bus stop in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district on Sunday evening, the police said. The incident occurred at a traffic intersection near Satrunda village on Ratlam-Lebad Road, about 30 km from the Ratlam district headquarters. Superintendent of Police Abhishek Tiwari said the truck has been impounded. According to eyewitnesses, people ran helter-skelter as the truck ploughed into them. A couple of mangled bodies lay scattered on the road. The truck driver fled the spot. PTI

Stones thrown at workers at embankment site near Nepal

Unidentified persons from Nepal threw stones at workers constructing an embankment on the Kali river in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand on Sunday. A worker hailing from Nepal was injured in the incident. An embankment is being built on the river on the Indian side to secure Dharchula town bordering Nepal from floods and erosion. Reena Joshi, District Magistrate of Pithoragarh, said this was not the first time that stones were thrown at workers. "Stone pelting incidents have increased in the past few months, even when we have explained to the residents living in the bordering district of Nepal that construction of the embankment is not going to adversely affect them in any way," Ms. Joshi said.

Traffickers are moving online in search of victims

SPECIAL

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

As her classroom moved online during the pandemic, 16-year old Preeti (name changed) got a brand new mobile phone to carry on with her studies. With it came an introduction to social media and end-to-end chatting apps. The young girl from Alwar district of Rajasthan soon met Amit (name changed) on ShareChat and friendship blossomed, leading her to elope with him.

Three months later, she was rescued from Patiala in Punjab, after a relentless investigation and pursuit by police. Many others, however, are never found.

Confined to the digital world due to COVID-19 restrictions over the past two years, traffickers are scouring online classrooms, gaming platforms, matrimonial sites, dating apps, chat apps and even loan apps for potential victims.

In the small towns and villages of India – especially in States which are already known as hotbeds of trafficking such as Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh – women and children are being abused, blackmailed and trafficked using Web applications.

A study on changing trends in online abuse and trafficking of women and children done in these four States shows that 44% of the respondents started using the Internet only after the outbreak of COVID-19. It also found that 98% of the respondents use cheaper devices such as smartphones to access the Internet. 51% use it for school or college work, more than 56% for social media, almost 42% for e-commerce and 35% for online gaming.

The study, conducted by Space2Grow and Cyber-Peace Foundation, further goes on to show that among those who had felt uncomfortable during an online interaction, 53% responded by simply blocking the sender. About 31% told the sender that they were uncomfortable, 25% ignored them, 21% deleted the posts, almost 16% deleted their social media accounts, and 8% relented to the sender's request after repeatedly saying no to them.

Virtual threat: A study shows that 44% of the respondents started using the Internet only after the COVID-19 outbreak. GETTY IMAGES

Risk group

Experts feel that it is these 8% who are at serious risk. The *modus operandi* of predators ranges from luring somebody through relationships, blackmailing them by morphing their social media photographs, and offering loans which are difficult to pay back in cash.

In fact, there has been a global explosion of such exploitation and India is leading it. According to the U.S.-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber tipline report for 2021, India accounts for 4.69 million reports of online abuse of children out of the 29.3 million reports worldwide, the highest of any country.

"Child-grooming, which encompasses access and isolation, trust building, desensitisation and coercing and forcing into trafficking, are the tactics which are used," says Sundar Krishnan, executive director of the India Child Protection Fund. "Online sexual extortion often leads to physical abuse and trafficking," he added.

"All of the things related to abuse and trafficking of children and women have moved to the cyberspace. The first connect happens on cyber platforms," says Rakesh Tiwari of the NGO Prayatna who works in Rajasthani districts like Bharatpur.

Traffickers are increasingly using new and innovative digital platforms such as instant loan apps, gaming sites, and deep fake technology.

"For example, once you download an instant loan app, they immediately ask for permission to access your information like the photo gallery and messages. Then the blackmailing starts and further exploitation starts happening," says Vineet Kumar, founder and president of Cyberpeace Foundation.

Privacy awareness

The only way out is better awareness among women and children as well as better training for law enforcement agencies and technology platforms.

It is also important to build the capability of law enforcement officials. We need to create a legal deterrence through enhanced detection mechanisms for online and human interface, says Mr. Krishnan.

"The number one thing which we are trying to bring in is a paradigm shift in changing the discourse of child porn as an organised economic crime. It is a thriving multi-billion-dollar industry like a tech unicorn," he says.

The government has worked to create awareness through programmes such as Digital Shakti, where women are taught how to be safe online.

India scores highest-ever ranking in aviation safety

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

With the country getting its highest-ever rank in the ICAO aviation safety rankings, Arun Kumar, chief of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, on Sunday said the challenge is to further improve the air safety ecosystem.

The comment also comes against the backdrop of the country's aviation sector slowly coming back to the growth trajectory after being severely hit by the pandemic.

In the latest rankings by the Indian Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), India has jumped to the 48th place from the 102nd spot in 2018. The ranking, which also places it ahead of China (49), is the highest ever received by India, officials say.

"A robust safety oversight system certified and acknowledged by the experts is a *sine qua non* for flight safety and very assuring for the flying public... The DGCA team has worked tirelessly to strengthen aviation safety. We are on a peak and so the challenge is to maintain and improve further," Mr. Arun Kumar said.

Nagaland houses fly black flags to mark a year of Mon killings

The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation, an apex body of seven tribes across six districts, has called for a protest on the anniversary

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Households across six districts of eastern Nagaland hoisted black flags on Sunday to mark a year of the killing of 14 people in a botched Army operation and resultant violence in Mon district on December 4 and 5, 2021.

A soldier was also killed when the villagers retaliated.

Every house and public place sported a black flag following a call by the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), the apex body of seven tribes across six districts, to observe December 4 and 5 as 'black days'. The six districts comprising the region are Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak, Shamator and Tuensang.

"The world may forget but we remember how you were killed by the Indian 21 Para Special Force on this day," the posters put up at Oting village read. The residents gathered for a programme at the village's public ground, demanding justice for the families of the victims.

As many as 15 people, including a soldier, were killed in a botched Army operation and subsequent violence last December. PTI

The Army commandos shot six Oting villagers in a pick-up van on their way home from a coal mine at Tiru nearby, "mistaking" them for extremists. Eight others, including a soldier and a resident from the neighbouring Upper Tiru village, were killed when the villagers retaliated.

"We carried out a candlelight vigil remembering the lives lost at the Konyak Community Centre (in Dimapur) and lamenting the denial of justice to the families of the victims. Special prayers will be held on Monday apart from a black flag protest," H.A. Hongnao Konyak, the vice-president of Konyak Union, said.

The union represents the Konyaks, the Naga tribe the slain men belonged to. The protesters demanded the prosecution of 30 soldiers chargesheeted by the Nagaland government's Special Investigation Team for the incident.

Singapore govt. cites ruling by India's Supreme Court

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Singapore's most recent amendment to its Constitution to "protect" the heterosexual definition of marriage and prevent its constitutionality from being challenged in court has partly been justified by the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) government by citing the increasingly liberal stance the Supreme Court of India has taken on issues of marriage and familial structure since it decriminalised homosexuality in 2018.

Law Minister K. Shanmugam had, before introducing the Amendment Bill, cited a ruling of the Indian Supreme Court as a warning to say that unless the government takes this move, Singapore may see similar legal challenges, thereby justifying the announcement made by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong a week before.

The ruling cited by Mr. Shanmugam was in a case where a Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and A.S. Bopanna had observed that family units may take the form of queer relationships and that such "atypical" units were "equally deserving not only of protection under law but also of the benefits available under social welfare legislation".

In the September statement, Mr. Shanmugam had said, "This is happening just a few years after the Indian Supreme Court also struck out their Section 377 (which is similar to our 377A), in 2018. Our courts have traditionally eschewed such an approach, and have said that these matters should be dealt with in Parliament. The Constitutional amendments will seek to ensure that."

The amendment was passed by the Singapore Parliament this week, as a "quid pro quo" to "protect" the institution of marriage while at the same time decriminalising homosexual activity between consenting men.

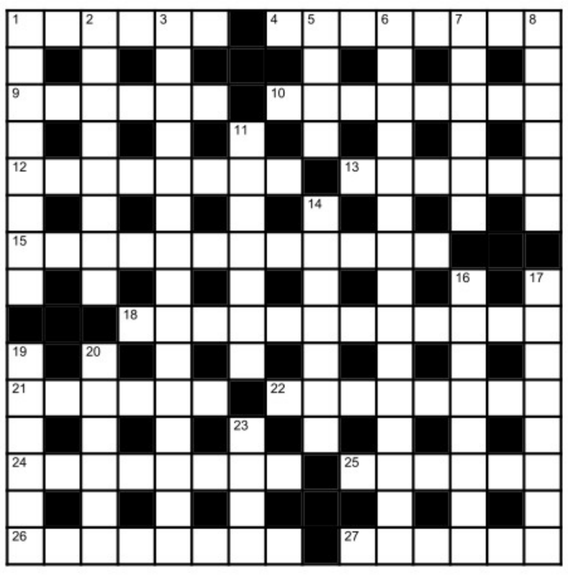
And while the decriminalisation of gay sex has brought relief to activists in the country, the Constitution Amendment has once again raised concerns over Parliament restricting courts' powers to examine the constitutionality of certain issues.

TH CROSSWORD + 13728

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Top of ground is wet, surface is rough (6)
4 Charlie's voice of indignation at Chinese food (4,4)
9 Calling it neat - oddly it's China (6)
10 "Corrupt from day one" - recalled indent (8)
12 Liquid Sodium carbonate not counted as an elixir (8)
13 Partly release the Neon gas (6)
15 Service built is how cars are manufactured today (4-8)
18 Movie online - it could affect your mood (12)
21 Snake has taken shelter, is resting (6)
22 Old Italian cavorted with centaurs (8)
24 Left wingers with shoddy clothes accept right winger (8)
25 Essentially sent to check weapon - it's a threat (6)
26 Agreed to arrange outboard sporting event (8)
27 Usher first customer into fancy store (6)

Down

1 By midnight, Arden becomes Arden the policeman (8)
2 Perhaps Mary found a military establishment (4,4)
3 Used mnemonics - spot on when one can't think clearly (3,6,6)
5 List to follow (4)
6 Advice to shun dhoti if one wants to be assertive at home (4,3,8)
7 Opening allowed under watch (6)
8 Spice girl goes under - crazy! (6)
11 Teacher loves to cover two chapters - it's just hot air (7)
14 Group wearing pretty split skirt (7)
16 A technique in playing violin, about to be covered with various topics (8)
17 Little houses, study coming up (8)
19 Crazy to be supported by free capital (6)
20 Security is prim if taken separately (6)
23 Dress up and boast (4)

SUDOKU

9				7	3	2	4	
			2			8		5
		8				9	3	
3		9	1					
		7				4		
					8	5		3
	9	3				7		
6		2			7			
	7	1	4	9				2

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

	C	A	R	L	I	N	E	T	H	I	S	T	L	E
A		C		I		E		U		G		H		M
N	E	R	D	S		V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E
T		O		Z		E		I		O		G		R
H	I	P	S	T	E	R		P	A	R	T	H	I	A
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M	O	T	T	O		I	S	L	A	M	A	B	A	D
		A		H		N		O		U		A		
R	O	L	E	M	O	D	E	L		S	I	S	A	L
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B	A	C	K	E	N	D		I	N	V	O	I	C	E
O		L		T		E		P		I		N		D
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I		A		R		I		P		L		D		R
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	C	A	R	O	L	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

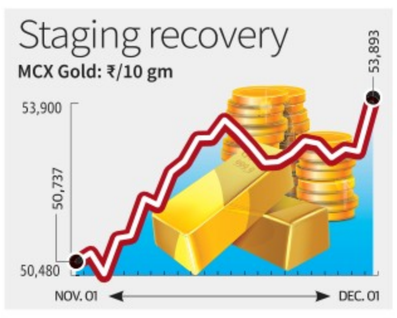
3	8	4	6	2	7	1	9	5
7	5	6	1	4	9	3	8	2
1	2	9	3	5	8	7	4	6
2	6	1	7	8	3	9	5	4
4	7	5	2	9	1	6	3	8
8	9	3	4	6	5	2	7	1
9	4	2	8	7	6	5	1	3
5	1	8	9	3	2	4	6	7
6	3	7	5	1	4	8	2	9

FAITH

Is dream a myth or a reality?

Dream is being in a state of sub-conscious mind. It is a reflection of one's thoughts. A person may derive happiness or sadness through dreams. A question arises whether dream is developed by us or created by God. Is it a reality or a myth. The great Acharya Sri Ramanuja in his divine work "Sri Bashyam" says that dreams are true and given by God. The cumulative effects of our good and bad deeds are depleted through dreams also. It is equally considered as a sign of good and bad omen. Are there any evidence in scriptures? Sri Anantha Padmanabhachariar in a discourse quoted from Srimad Ramayanam the dream of Bharatha as a negative sign. When Bharatha was in his maternal grandfather's house in Kekaya kingdom, he had bad dreams about his father and came the next day messengers from Ayodhya to inform about the demise of his father king Dasaratha.

The instance of Trijata's dream (*swapnam*) is reckoned as a good sign. When Goddess Sita was in deep anguish after Ravana threatened Her in Asokavanam, Trijata – a pious among devils – consoled Her and said she had dreamt of a good scene like Sri Rama coming and retrieving Goddess Sita. According to the Kamba Ramayanam, Goddess Sita told Trijata that Her left eye flinched, eyelid flapped, left shoulder and fingers were in mild tremor and palpitations (mythologically a good sign for ladies on the left side these indications and for gents on the right side). Goddess Sita also told her that She had the same signs as when Sri Rama entered Mithila for the first time. No sooner than later Hanuman came and told Goddess Sita, the message of Sri Rama.



Gold, silver gain sheen

PRECIOUSMETALS

Weakness in the U.S. dollar and expectations of less aggressive rate increases by the Federal Reserve played a key role in helping precious metals seek higher levels

B. Krishnakumar

Precious metals reversed eight-month losing streak and closed on a positive note at the end of November. Comex Gold prices rose 3% on December 1 to close above the psychological $1,800 per-ounce mark as the dollar weakened on the expectations of a slower interest rate hike from the U.S. Federal Reserve. Signs of cooling U.S. inflation also helped improve sentiment towards precious metals.

Weakness in the U.S. dollar and the expectations of a less-aggressive rate hikes by the Federal Reserve played a key role in helping precious metals seek higher levels. As a result, Comex Gold gained 7.3% to close at $1,759.9. The performance of Comex Silver was even better with the metal gaining 13.9% to close at $21.78.

In the domestic market, MCX Gold gained 4.7% to settle at ₹52,931 per 10 gm while MCX Silver rose 7.8% to end ₹63,461 a kg. The performance of Comex gold was in line with expectations. As observed last month, gold price ruled firm and also moved well past the then mentioned target of $1,725-1,730. The short-term outlook stays positive, and the price could head to the immediate target of $1,870-1,880. A move past $1,825 would strengthen the case for a rise to the target zone.

While the short-term outlook is positive, a drop below the recent low at $1,730 would be a cause of concern. This would invalidate the positive outlook and could open up further downside possibility for comex gold.

Similar to Comex gold, the price action in Comex silver too was in sync with expectations. The price managed to achieve the target of $22-$22.5 mentioned last month. The short-term outlook is positive and Comex silver may head to the immediate target of $24.5-$25.

The outlook would be strengthened if the price moves above immediate resistance at $23.7. On the contrary, a fall below $20.6 would invalidate the positive outlook.

Domestic market moves

In the domestic market too, the precious metals managed to seek higher levels and the price action was in alignment with last month's projection. MCX Gold was in an uptrend and reached the target of ₹52,200-53,000. In the short-term, MCX Gold is likely to rise to the next target zone at ₹55,000-55,500.

The positive outlook would be confirmed if the price moves above ₹54,200. A fall below ₹53,200 would invalidate the positive outlook.

MCX Silver ruled firm and hit the target zone of ₹63,000-63,500. The short-term outlook is positive and the price is likely to head to the immediate target of ₹65,000-65,500.

The positive outlook would be confirmed on a move past ₹63,700. However, a fall below ₹59,400 would invalidate the positive view.

To summarise, the outlook for precious metals remains positive in the short-term. It is however too early to conclude if the recent recovery marks the beginning of a fresh uptrend. For now, the recent recovery comes across as a counter trend move within an overall downtrend.

(The writer is a Chennai-based analyst/trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Put your money where the 'bulk' of your mind is

Lump-sum investing works best when the investment in a desired fund is low — say at about 5-10% — as any loss or gain it makes will not materially impact the overall returns

INVESTMENT OPTIONS

Bhavana Acharya

> Arbitrage and equity savings funds see low return volatility and lump-sum investing here doesn't lead to problem of investing at peaks

> Most debt fund categories, other than those with longer-term portfolio maturities or mainly invested in gilts, have low volatility

If there's one thing that mutual fund investors would agree on, it is that SIPs are great ways to be investing. True. But does it mean that lump-sum investing is not a good idea at all? No. There are a few important scenarios where investing in one go, instead of spreading it out through SIPs or systematic transfer plans, is perfectly acceptable.

Investment amounts

When you find yourself with a surplus sum to invest, you wonder whether you need to set up an SIP/ STP for this amount or if you can invest in one go.

An easy answer is to look at how much this investment amount is in relation to your overall investment or your investment in the desired fund.

If it is low – say at 5-10% – then lump-sum investing will be absolutely fine to do. Why? Because when the proportion of the investment is very small, any gain or loss it makes will not materially impact overall returns.

That means that any risks that lump-sum investing would involve are minimal and that staggering investments through SIPs or STPs are ineffective.

For instance, say you had ₹1 lakh to invest in January 2020 and you want to invest in the Nifty 50. Now, say your existing investment was ₹5 lakh in the Nifty 50, making the fresh investment 20% of it. In this case, running a 10-month SIP would improve your overall IRR by 0.5 percentage points (as of November 2022) than a lump sum.

But if your investment was, say, ₹15 lakh then there's virtually no difference between the SIP and lump-sum return.

Investment destinations

The point above goes for any fund, whether debt, equity or hybrid. But where you are investing can also tell you whether lump-sum investing is fine to do.

Most debt fund categories, other than those with longer-term portfolio maturities or predominantly invested in gilts, have low volatility. These fund categories also do not see big return dips, barring credit events.

For example, the very short-duration categories saw one-month losses about 2% of the time in the past 10 years.

Short duration and banking and PSU funds slipped into one-month losses just 10% of the time.

Similarly, arbitrage funds and equity savings funds also see low-return volatility and low loss probabilities.

This means two things. One, the risk of mistiming is low. Therefore, lump-sum investing in these funds does not lead to the problem of investing at peaks unlike equity-based funds.

Two, without volatility or big corrections, cost averaging benefits do not really come into play.

Consequently, SIPs don't offer that particular advantage over lump-sum investing.

All this aside, categories such as liquid or the very short-term funds are primarily used for short-term investment horizons.

This also limits any specific benefit of investing through SIPs. For these funds, therefore, you can invest via lumpsums if you wish to. You do not have to necessarily use SIPs.

When markets call for it

In equity funds, lump-sum investing is risky because there's the chance of investing at the wrong time and see your returns vanish.

Calling market bottoms is also genuinely hard. SIPs work around this because it enables investing at different market levels.

But sometimes, it can be clear that markets are correcting if you're a touch market-savvy or able to understand market movements in general.

In March 2020, for instance, or earlier this year. When you can see that markets have been steadily heading south for several weeks and market commentary suggests that it's not all sanguine, you can use such opportunities to your advantage through lump-sum investments.

That is, even while your SIPs run, you can in addition deploy lump sums during market corrections. This will enable better capturing of the opportunity in cheaper stock prices than relying on SIPs alone. Short-lived corrections are also harder to catch through SIPs.

No waiting

You do not need to wait for the market bottom to invest; even capturing part of the correction using lump sums in addition to SIPs will be useful.

Lump-sum investments give you some degree of control over when to invest, unlike an SIP which invests both during market rallies and corrections.

You could break your surplus up into smaller amounts and deploy these through multiple lump sums at different points during the correction as well.

(The writer is Co-founder, PrimeInvestor.in)

Loss beyond limit

COVERNOTE

There is something called a total loss claim. This is when the vehicle is stolen/lost or damaged beyond repair and reuse. Here, the IDV – value the vehicle is insured for under the policy – is paid

K. Nitya Kalyani

I have been hand-holding an insured recently through a vehicle claim. His pride-and-joy SUV was submerged in flash floods.

The insurance company offered to settle the claim on a constructive total loss basis. That means that the cost of repairing the sustained damage would be equal to or more than the insurance cover and so, the insurer pays what is called the insured declared value, or IDV, in full as the claim. The IDV is the value the vehicle is insured for under the policy. Although it implies that the insured has declared this as the value of the car, insurance companies offer a set value for each make, variant and model (denoting the year) according to their internal guidelines. While it approximates to the market value, you can tweak it to your satisfaction when you take the policy or renew it.

Incidentally, there is also something called a total loss claim. This is when the vehicle is stolen/lost or damaged beyond repair and reuse. Here too, IDV is paid. The vehicle's Registration Certificate (RC), is then surrendered to the Road Transport Authority (RTA) for cancellation. The insurance policy is cancelled. The insured/claimant is not liable for any future third party liability claims involving the vehicle.

The vehicle, or what's left of it, termed salvage, now belongs to the insurer. The insured can retain it and pay the salvage value to the insurer or have it deducted from his claim amount.

What about salvage in the case of a lost or stolen vehicle? If and when it is recovered, the salvage belongs to the insurer. Insurance companies sell salvage off at auctions periodically.

Sometimes the vehicle has some commercial value. Somebody who can repair and use/ resell it, or can use it for parts and would be willing to buy it. If so, the insurance company is liable for IDV less the salvage buyer's offer and the vehicle title, the RC, will be made over to the buyer.

In the claim I have referred to above, a buyer was identified by the insurer as part of the claim settlement process and suggested to the insured.

Interesting questions came up in the claim, leading to a lot of head-scratching by all three parties – the insured, the insurer and the salvage buyer. They involved timely transfer of the vehicle vis-a vis third-party liability on the vehicle and GST on the sale. The RTA angle added further flavour. We will see the three valid points of view in the next instalment of Cover Note.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Citi Bank	10.75 onwardS	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3%
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
ICICI Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	10.25 -17.60	10,685-12,588	2,137-2,518	Up to 2% (Min. Rs 1,000, Max. Rs 10,000)
State Bank of India	10.65 -15.15	10,784-11,934	2,157-2,387	Up to 1.50% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
Axis Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	9.75-14.25	10,562-11,699	2,112-2,340	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 5,000)
Canara Bank	12.10-15.80	11,148-12,106	2,230-2,421	Up to 1%
Punjab National Bank	9.80-16.35	10,574-12,252	2,115-2,450	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75-15.50	10,562-12,027	2,112-2,405	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	10.49-17.99	10,744-12,694	2,149-2,539	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	10.80-14.90	10,821-11,869	2,164-2,374	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Upto 3.84%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.55-12.15	10,759-11,160	2,152-2,232	Up to 1%
South Indian Bank	12.25-20.00	11,185-13,247	2,237-2,649	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	11.95-12.35	11,110-11,211	2,222-2,242	Up to 1%
IDFC First Bank	10.49 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3.50%
Bank of Maharashtra	8.90-14.70	10,673-11,816	2,135-2,363	Up to 1%
Indian Overseas Bank*	11.90-12.90	11,097-11,351	2,219-2,270	Up to 0.75%
Karnataka Bank	13.48	11,500	2,300	Up to 0.25% (Minimum Rs 250)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3%

1.00% Special Interest Concession to Borrowers with CIC Score of 800 and above

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.40-10.20	10,234-10,673	Up to Rs. 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.30-9.15	10,210-10,146	waived off on account of PNB "PNB FESTIVAL BONANZA OFFER 2022"
Bank of Baroda	8.50-11.80	10,258-11,072	Up to 0.50% (Rs 2,500 - Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	8.80-11.50	10,331-10,996	NIL till 31st December 2022
Bank of India	8.30-10.25	10,210-10,685	NIL
UCO Bank	8.80 - 10.05	10,331-10,636	1% (Upto Rs 1,500)
State Bank of India	8.20-9.20	10,186-10,428	NIL
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70-12.20	10,307-11,173	NIL
Indian Overseas Bank**	9.45	10,489	NIL till 31st December 2022
ICICI Bank	8.30 onwards	10,210 onwards	Rs 5,500-Rs 8,500
HDFC Bank	8.50 onwards	10,258 onwards	Up to 0.50% (Rs 3,500-Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.99-11.04	10,377-10,881	Up to 0.60% (Rs 2,500-Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	10.40	10,722	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
South Indian Bank	11.05-12.50	10,884-11,249	1% (Max: Rs. 10,000)
City Union Bank	13.50-14.00	11,505-11,634	1.25% (Min: Rs 750)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders. 0.05% concession on interest rate to women & armed forces personnel subject to minimum floor ceiling of RLLR.
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.20% to borrowers for financing Electric 4 Wheelers.*

Rates and charges as on November 30 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

LUMAJANG

Indonesia's Mount Semeru volcano erupts triggering top alert status

AP

Indonesia's Mount Semeru erupted on Sunday spewing hot ash clouds a mile into the sky and sending rivers of lava down its side, sparking the evacuation of nearly 2,000 people exactly one year after its last major eruption killed dozens. The eruption prompted authorities to raise the alert status to the highest level. AFP

GAZA CITY

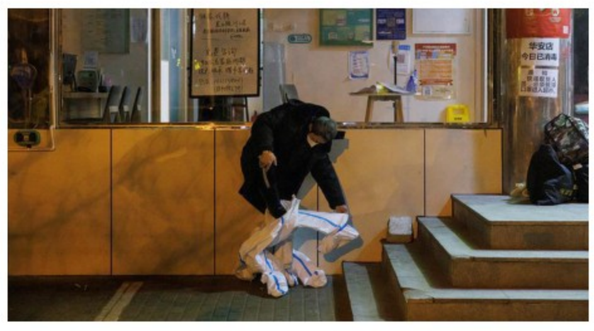
Israel aircraft strike Gaza Strip after attack by Palestine militants

REUTERS

Israeli aircraft struck several military sites in the Gaza Strip early on Sunday, hours after Palestinian militants fired a missile into the southern part of the country, Israel said. The Israeli military said the airstrikes targeted a weapons manufacturing facility and an underground tunnel belonging to the militant group Hamas. AP

HONG KONG

China reports two new COVID-19 deaths as some restrictions eased



REUTERS

China on Sunday reported two additional deaths from COVID-19 as some cities move cautiously to ease anti-pandemic restrictions following increasingly vocal public frustrations. Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang region and where the protests first erupted, will reopen malls, restaurants and other venues from Monday. AP

BEIJING

Three Chinese astronauts return to earth after six-month-long mission

AP

Three Chinese astronauts landed in a northern desert on Sunday after six months working to complete construction of the Tiangong station, a symbol of the country's ambitious space programme. A capsule carrying the three touched down at a landing site in the Gobi Desert in northern China at approximately 1740 IMT. AP

OPEC+ to continue present output, despite fresh sanctions on Russia

However, the organisation of 13 oil-producing countries says it is ready to 'meet at any time and take immediate additional measures' to address market developments. The next meeting of the body is originally scheduled for June 2023

Agence France-Presse
VIENNA

Major oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia agreed on Sunday to maintain their current output levels in a climate of uncertainty and ahead of fresh sanctions against Moscow coming into force next week.

The representatives of the 13 members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) led by Riyadh decided to stick to their course agreed in October of a production cut of two million barrels per day until the end of 2023.

OPEC+ described its October decision to cut as one "which was purely driven by market considerations", adding that it had been "the necessary and the right course of action towards stabilising global oil markets", a statement said.

All-weather allies: For OPEC+, the big unknown in the oil equation is how heavily the sanctions will hit Russian supply. AP

The next OPEC+ ministerial meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2023.

But the alliance said it was ready to "meet at any time and take immediate additional measures" to address market developments and support the oil market if necessary.

On Friday, the EU, G7 and Australia agreed to a $60-per-barrel price cap on Russian oil, which will come into effect on Monday or soon after, alongside an EU embargo on maritime deliveries of Russian crude oil.

It will prevent seaborne shipments of Russian crude to the European Union, which account for two thirds of the bloc's oil imports from Russia, an attempt to deprive Moscow's war chest of billions of euros.

While Russia denounced on Saturday the incoming price cap, threatening to suspend deliveries to any country that adopted the measure, Ukraine suggested the cap should have been set even lower.

For OPEC+, the big unknown in the oil equation is how heavily sanctions will hit Russian supply.

Moscow's threat to suspend deliveries to countries abiding by the price cap will put "some in a very uncomfortable position", said OANDA analyst Craig Erlam: "Choosing between losing access to cheap Russian crude or facing G7 sanctions".

Amid economic gloom fuelled by soaring inflation and fears of China's weaker energy demand due to its COVID-related restrictions, the two global crude benchmarks remained close to their lowest level of the year, far from their March peaks.

Since the group's last meeting in early October, Brent North Sea oil and its U.S. equivalent, WTI, have lost more than 6% of their value. Moving forward, OPEC+ might still feel compelled to adopt "a more aggressive stance" by cutting or threatening to cut production, UniCredit analyst Edoardo Campanella said.

"Russia might also retaliate by leveraging its influence within OPEC+ to push for more production cuts down the road, thus exacerbating the global energy crisis," he added.

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Herzog becomes first Israel President to visit Bahrain

Agence France-Presse
MANAMA

Israeli President Isaac Herzog arrived on Sunday in Bahrain, the first visit by an Israeli head of state to the small Gulf kingdom since the two countries normalised relations in 2020.

Mr. Herzog, whose role is largely ceremonial, was greeted at the airport by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani, according to pictures posted to his Twitter account.

He said on Twitter he planned to meet King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, as well as Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, who is Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Accompanied by an economic delegation, Mr. Herzog said he would discuss "ways to strengthen our economic cooperation" along with climate change and security issues.

Mr. Herzog said he would then travel to Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates.

Making friends: Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa receives a gift from Israel President Isaac Herzog in Manama on Sunday. AFP

In 2020, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco became the first Arab states in decades to normalise relations with Israel, following negotiations spearheaded by the administration of former U.S. president Donald Trump.

The Jewish state had earlier reached peace treaties with neighbouring Egypt and Jordan.

"I call on more states in our region to join this partnership, strengthening the Middle East," Mr. Herzog tweeted on Sunday.

"The expanding circle of (Middle East) peace is highly important, especially amid threats to global and regional stability. In the face of hate, threats & terror, there is one answer: alliances with friends."

Outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid, then Israel's top diplomat, visited Bahrain last year to open the Israeli embassy there.

In February of this year, Israel signed a defence agreement with Bahrain and Naftali Bennett became the first Israeli premier to visit the country.

EU to adapt its state aid schemes to counter U.S. green subsidy package

Reuters
BRUSSELS

The EU will adapt its state aid rules to prevent an exodus of investment triggered by a new U.S. green energy subsidy package, the bloc's chief executive said on Sunday.

"Competition is good ... but this competition must respect a level playing field," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a speech in the Belgian city of Bruges.

The U.S. challenge

"The (U.S.) Inflation Reduction Act should make us reflect on how we can improve our state aid frameworks and adapt them to a new global environment," she added.

The 27-country bloc fears that the U.S. $430 billion Inflation Reduction Act with its generous tax breaks may lure away EU businesses and disadvantage European companies, from car manufacturers to makers of green technology.

The topic is one of several on the agenda of the EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council meeting on December 5.

Participants include U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, along with European Commission Executive Vice Presidents Valdis Dombrovskis and Margrethe Vestager.

Iran executes four persons it says spied for Israeli intelligence

Associated Press
CAIRO

Iranian authorities executed four persons on Sunday accused of working for Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, the state-run *IRNA* news agency said. Three others received lengthy prison sentences.

IRNA said the country's Revolutionary Guard announced the arrests of a network of people linked to the Israeli agency. It said the members had previous criminal records.

Israel and Iran are regional arch-enemies and Iran occasionally announces the detention of people it says are spying for foreign countries.

Tehran does not recognise Israel and supports anti-Israeli armed groups across the region, such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

Network members stole and destroyed private and public property and kidnapped individuals and interrogated them, according to the report. It said the alleged spies had weapons and received wages from Mossad in the form of cryptocurrency. Iranian authorities provided no evidence for any of the alleged crimes.

Iran starts works on new nuclear plant

Associated Press
CAIRO

Iran on Saturday began construction on a new nuclear power plant in the country's southwest, Iranian state TV announced, amid tensions with the U.S. over sweeping sanctions imposed after Washington pulled out of the Islamic Republic's nuclear deal with world powers.

Sport

SNAPSHOTS

Arjun and Vaishali emerge triumphant

Arjun Erigaisi and R. Vaishali won both the blitz titles of the Tata Steel Chess India in Kolkata on Sunday.

The results (Indians unless specified): Eighteenth round: Open: Hikaru Nakamura (US) 11.5 bt R. Praggnanandhaa 8.5; D. Gukesh 6.5 lost to Wesley So (US) 8; Vidit Gujrathi 9 bt Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze) 9.5; Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 7.5 drew with Parham Maghsoodloo (IRI) 9; Nihal Sarin 8 drew with Arjun Erigaisi 12.5.

Women: Koneru Humpy 9.5 bt Oliwia Kiolbasa (Pol) 6; R. Vaishali 13.5 drew with Anna Ushenina (Ukr) 8.5; B. Savitha Shri 6.5 lost to Dronavalli Harika 11; Mariya Muzychuk (Ukr) 12 lost to Nana Dzagnidze (Geo) 8.5; Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 10.5 bt Bhakti Kulkarni 4.

The standings: Open: 1. Arjun; 2. Hikaru Nakamura; 3. Mamyedarov; 4-5. Parham and Vidit; 6. Praggnanandhaa; 7-8. Nihal and So; 9. Abdusattorov; 10. Gukesh.

Vaishali. DEBASISH BHADURI

Women: 1. Vaishali; 2. Mariya Muzychuk; 3. Harika; 4. Anna Muzychuk; 5. Humpy; 6-7. Ushenina and Dzagnidze; 8. Savitha; 9. Kiolbasa; 10. Bhakti.

Hovland sizzles, climbs to the top

Viktor Hovland rose to the sole lead after a terrific eight-under third round in the Hero World Challenge at Albany, Nassau,. Hovland, despite maintaining that he is not playing at his best, went three shots clear of second placed Scottie Scheffler.

Hovland's excellent putting game came to the fore, as he carded 10 birdies on the day.

Scheffler made a clean six-under to stay in the hunt.

The scores (top-5): 203: Viktor Hovland (69, 70, 64). **206:** Scottie Scheffler (72, 68, 66). **208:** Justin Thomas (72, 70, 66), Cameron Young (71, 69, 68). **209:** Collin Morikawa (69, 71, 69), Xander Schauffele (72, 68, 69).

Maiden title for Kadur-Nikhil duo

Karna Kadur and co-driver Nikhil V. Pai of Arka Motorsports clinched their maiden overall Karnataka-1000 title in the Prasaditya 46th Karnataka-1000 Rally, a round of the Blueband FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship, in Tumakuru on Sunday. Finishing second, over a minute behind Kadur was Aroor Arjun Rao (co-driver Satish Rajagopal) of Mandovi Racing while Philippos Matthai (Harish Gowda), who returned to rallying after a 13-year break, finished third overall.

India loses series to Australia 4-1

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh's brace went in vain as India lost 4-5 to Australia in the final game to hand the five-Test hockey series 1-4 to the World No. 1 side in Adelaide on Sunday.

The result: Australia 5 (Tom Wickham 2, 17, Aran Zalewski 30, Jacob Anderson 40, Jake Whetton 54) bt India 4 (Harmanpreet 24, 60, Amit Rohidas 34, Sukhjeet Singh 55).

Mannat spins India U-19 to victory against NZ U-19

Left-arm spinner Mannat Kashyap scalped five for 25 as India women's U-19 defeated New Zealand by 29 runs in Mumbai on Sunday to take a 4-0 lead in the five-match T20 series.

The scores: India women's U-19 121/9 in 20 overs (G. Trisha 39, Kayley Knight 2/20, Ocean Bartlett 2/16) bt New Zealand women's U-19 92 in 18.3 overs (Mannat Kashyap 5/25, M. Shabnam 2/8).

Punjab, Railways win

Punjab men and Railways women emerged winners in the National basketball championship at Udaipur on Sunday.

The results: Men (final): Punjab 94 (Amritpal Singh 32, Gurbaz Singh Sandhu 31, Amjot Singh 14) bt Tamil Nadu 80 (A Aravind 21, Jeevanathan 20, Munin Bek 11).

Third place: Railways 88 (Sahil 32, Palpreet Singh 18, Rakesh Singh 10, Ratan Singh 10) bt Rajasthan 71 (Lokendra Singh 16, Deepak Choudhary 13, Piyush Meena 12).

Women (final): Railways 110 (Dharshini 19, M Pushpa 15, Madhu Kumari 11) bt Kerala 64 (Jayalakshmi 17, Anu Maria 13).

Third place: Delhi 74 (Raspreet Sidhu 27, Garima Gosain 18, Kritika 15) bt Karnataka 53 (Pavani Sangwan 15, Roshni John 12, Lopamudra 10).

Diamantakos does it for Blasters again

Dimitrios Diamantakos struck for the fourth time in as many games to give Kerala Blasters a 1-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) at Jamshedpur on Sunday. It was Blasters' fourth win on the trot, the first time in their history.
The win helped Blasters remain fifth in the table.

Unnati and Anish bag silver medals

Indian shuttlers Unnati Hooda and Anish Thoppani signed off with silver medals at Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships 2022 in Nonthaburi, Thailand, on Sunday.
Men's doubles pair of Arsh Mohammad and Sanskar Saraswat also finished second best.
Unnati went down 18-21, 21-9, 14-21 against Sarunrak Vitidsarn of Thailand.
Anish lost 8-21, 24-22, 19-21 to Chung-Hsiang Yih in the U-15 boys' singles final.
Arsh and Sanskar fell short 13-21, 21-19, 22-24 to Chinese Taipei's Lai Po-Yu and Yi-Hao Lin in the summit clash.

Kenkre holds Gokulam Kerala to a draw

Kenkre FC played out a 1-1 draw with Gokulam Kerala FC in their fifth-round fixture at the I-League in Mumbai on Sunday. An early first-half tap-in goal by Lalhmangaihsanga Ralte was cancelled out by Shijin Thadhayouse.

LIVE TELECAST

Pakistan vs England: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m. onwards

FIFA World Cup 2022: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 8.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Giroud and Mbappe flatten the Poles

The former's 52nd goal makes him France's all-time top scorer; the latter nets a wonder goal and seals it with another strike

FIFA WORLD CUP

Star of the show: It was Mbappe's night out as he was involved in one assist and two goals, including this one. AFP

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

It's 52! A beaming Olivier Giroud flashed the magic number with his fingers – a five and a two. Or was it 'V' for victory that France achieved as the most underrated French striker scored one and then Kylian Mbappe added two more in this 3-1 victory over Poland?

After a game of chess where the pieces on the board moved back and forth, it was a simple move that undid the Poles. Dayot Upamecano found Kylian Mbappe in his usual left channel and the Parisian star threaded it perfectly to Giroud's path and his shot crossed Wojciech Szczesny in a flash.

Giroud was now France's highest scorer; Thierry Henry had been left behind.

Jakub Kaminski could have equalised immediately, but his drive took a deflection and rattled only the side netting. Poland defied predictions and was not here to just make the numbers. It attacked with vim and had eight attempts on goal in the first 45 minutes as France, often, hung on by a thread.

Medley of chances

Poland had a medley of chances in the 38th minute and it was only a miracle that France didn't concede. First a cutback fell for Piotr Zielinski, who smashed it straight at Hugo Lloris, and then the follow-up too was blocked by Raphael Varane.

In the second half, Giroud's acrobatic overhead effort was ruled out as Szczesny had gone to ground earlier. But then, Mbappe sneaked ahead in the race for the Golden Boot with two goals that took his tally to five.

Mbappe's first strike in the 74th minute left Poland wounded, and France escaped from the almost covered Al Thumama fortress and moved into the quarterfinals.

A handball by Upamecano in the dying seconds gave Robert Lewandowski the chance to score a second World Cup goal. His first effort from a stuttering run was gobbled up easily by Lloris. But the Polish captain took it again as his French counterpart had moved out of his line a fraction early. The stutter this time threw Lloris the other way and Lewandowski had his consolation.

The French luck here was much better than that of a solitary sparrow that flew helter-skelter for more than half the game, trying to find a way through the blinding lights and the overlapping arches. The sparrow finally did sneak out, as did France, with its stars finding a way.

The result: France 3 (Giroud 44, Mbappe 74, 90+1) bt Poland 1 (Lewandowski 90+9-pen).

Captivating: Messi ran rings around the Australian defenders and also scored a goal. GETTY IMAGES

Magician Messi pulls strings against the dogged Aussies

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

This has been the pilgrimage to Doha, the faithful moving from one shrine to another to see Lionel Messi redeem that one glaring fault line in his life.

All of us have been guilty of hyperbole, making a man bigger than the tournament. But Messi plays this better than most, his movements measured, as he looks like the only one at ease with the destiny that's about to unfold.

The stadium of blue and white with a tiny island of yellow tucked in a corner was sending Argentina some energy boost and it needed it plenty as a dogged Australia ran it ragged.

The Argentines played a game of steal, Rodrigo De Paul and Nicolas Otamendi the two men snapping as the others kept the ball in preparation of the tenacious Australian press that was soon to come. The Australians just ran; they anticipated a night of pain, where every muscle would be stretched.

Argentina kept changing positions, passing around to draw out an opening in the Aussie formation, but the Aussies kept their shape, keeping two lines of four ahead of its box.

The game was drifting. Then, the famous left foot scored. The goal was about placement and not power as the ball crept between Harry Souttar's legs and the goalkeeper's stretch. This was the only shot on target in the half and Messi made it count.

This was his first goal in a World Cup knockout and the 789th in a career of 1000 professional games. He took the freekick from the right and then (for a change) had a spring in his step to collect the rebound off Souttar's head. It was quickly passed around between Alex Mac Allister, De Paul and Otamendi and Messi then cushioned it with his foot before piercing the Aussie resistance.

As Lionel Scaloni switched to a back three, Argentina enjoyed the extra width, and Messi, too, was relishing the attention as he went on his zigzagging runs.

The sturdy Aussies were losing their nerve and Matt Ryan had to bear the brunt. A back pass coming his way created panic as De Paul hurriedly pressed. With his attention on Argentina's No. 7, Ryan missed the presence of Enzo Alvarez. The Benfica revelation made the most of the blindsided 'keeper to rob the ball and then turn and roll it into the empty net. The Aussie goal was most unexpected as Craig Goodwin's hopeful kick hit Enzo and changed trajectory to loop past a stranded Emiliano Martinez. Australia was suddenly perked up and a panicky Argentina was now wasting time as suddenly its lead looked thin.

The Aussies were winning the tackles and every loose ball the Argentines sprayed, it seemed there was another cruel twist. But Messi was in the zone, zipping past the perplexed Aussies with a minute left. He pushed the ball to Lautaro Martinez, the whole stadium pleading him to hit it right and calm down the fast-beating heart, but his kick soared like out-of-control blood pressure.

There was some fancy footwork in the end and it seemed the Aussies were defending with two left legs. But then the ball was at the other end, Australia throwing crosses to the dozen and Emiliano diving headlong to block the last attempt.

The whistle came and Argentina rejoiced. Here, too, Messi was leading the celebrations and the dance with the fans, who, come Friday, will be inside the golden domes of Lusail to continue the pilgrimage.

The result: Argentina 2 (Messi 35, Alvarez 57) bt Australia 1 (Fernandez 77-og).

FIGHTING HARD

Pele responding well to treatment for infection

Brazilian great Pele is responding well to treatment for a respiratory infection and his health condition has not worsened over the latest 24 hours, the Albert Einstein hospital said Saturday. The hospital said Pele is getting antibiotics at the same time he undergoes chemotherapy.

GO FOR IT!

Nakatomo urges players to summon the 'samurai spirit'

Japan defender Yuto Nakatomo asked his teammates to show the "samurai spirit" in Monday's round of 16 match against Croatia. "If the players are scared during battle, they will not be able to use their weapons fully. They have to play with courage," he said.

FORTUNES FLUCTUATE

First Pakistan-England Test headed for thrilling finish

England declared on 264 for seven to set Pakistan a target of 343 with four sessions to go in the opening Test.
The scores: England 657 and 264/7 decl. (Brook 87, Root 73) vs Pakistan 579 (Babar 136, Imam 121, Shafique 114, Jacks 6/161) and 80/2 (Imam 43 batting).

DRAWING FIRST BLOOD

Lyon spins Australia to victory in first Test against Windies

Australia bowled the West Indies out for 333 on Sunday to record a thumping 164-run win in the first Test in Perth.
The scores: Australia 598/4 decl. & 182/2 decl. bt WI 283 & 333 (Kraigg Brathwaite 110, Roston Chase 55, Tagenarine Chanderpaul 45, Alzarri Joseph 43, Nathan Lyon 6/128).

PRO KABADDI LEAGUE

Prateek shines as Giants rally past U Mumba

U Mumba held a big lead in the first half, but Gujarat Giants fought back to win 38-36 in the Pro Kabaddi League in Hyderabad on Sunday. Parteek Dahiya (13 points) starred for Giants. Bengaluru Bulls defeated UP Yoddhas 38-35 in the second match.

Brazil takes on South Korea as both teams battle injuries

Talisman: Coach Tite has reiterated that Neymar has recovered and will turn out against South Korea. AFP

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

Brazil making it to the knockout rounds of a World Cup is no surprise. A loss to Cameroon in its last group game didn't stop the *Selecao* from making it past the group stage for the ninth consecutive edition.

The Brazilian journalists, however, were not too pleased with Tite's "lack of respect for the tournament and other teams" in fielding nine new starters in that game.

That fringe Brazil created chances aplenty, but the goal was missing as those auditioning for a starting role gave a masterclass in wastefulness. Brazil doctor Rodrigo Lasmar has worked the hardest in Qatar as the team continues to worry about Neymar's fitness. He, however, has indicated that Neymar might be fit to play, recovering well enough from the ankle injury that he had suffered in the first game. Tite, was more forthcoming, saying "yes" when asked if Neymar will play during his pre-match press conference.

However, Brazil will miss Gabriel Jesus and Alex Telles as both men are out of the tournament with knee problems. While Richarlison, already the scorer of a wonder goal, will be leading the attack, Telles's withdrawal and the recurrent hip problem of Alex Sandro might cause a problem to Tite for the position of left back.

South Korea, too, has been plagued by injuries.

Son Heung-min miraculously recovered from a facial fracture to play in Qatar and Hwang Hee-chan has also struggled with a hamstring strain.

Today's Fiesta

Japan vs Croatia (8.30 P.M. IST)
Matches 3, Japan 1, Croatia 1, Drawn 1
Brazil vs Korea (12.30 A.M., TUE)
Matches 7, Brazil 6, Korea 1

Mehidy steers Bangladesh to an incredible win in opening ODI

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Mehidy Hasan Miraz hit an unbeaten 38 and put on a record tenth-wicket stand as Bangladesh edged out India by one wicket in a thrilling opening one-day international on Sunday.

Chasing 187 for victory, the hosts fell to 136 for nine before Mehidy and Mustafizur Rahman put together a 51-run partnership – Bangladesh's best ever for the final wicket – to achieve their target with 24 balls to spare in Dhaka.

Bangladesh leads the three-match series 1-0.

Mehidy, coming in to bat at No. 8, hit four fours and two sixes and survived a dropped catch by wicketkeeper K.L. Rahul on 17 to turn the match on its head.

Mehidy hit the winning runs in his 39-ball knock to trigger wild celebrations. Mustafizur scored 10 off 11 balls.

Shakib Al Hasan (5/36) set up the victory as India was bowled out for 186 in 41.2 overs despite Rahul's 73, after Bangladesh elected to field first. Pace bowler Ebadot claimed four wickets for 47 runs.

Bangladesh collapsed after a few good partnerships, including a 48-run stand between skipper Litton Das and Shakib, who made 29.

Spinner Washington Sundar got Litton out for 41 and then Shakib to a stunning one-handed catch at extra-cover by Virat Kohli.

Bangladesh suffered a double blow in successive balls when Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim fell. Mahmudullah fell lbw to Shardul Thakur and then Mohammed Siraj bowled Mushfiqur. Debutant fast bowler Kuldeep Sen came back to pick up two wickets in the first over of his second spell.

"The pitch was a bit challenging, the odd ball was turning. You have to understand how to play. There are no excuses, we are used to such types of conditions," Rohit said.

Earlier, Rahul came in as wicketkeeper-batter after regular gloveman Rishabh Pant was released abruptly from the ODI squad by BCCI.

Stellar show: Mehidy Hasan kept his nerve to take Bangladesh home. AP

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Rohit Sharma b Shakib 27 (31b, 4x4, 1x6), Shikhar Dhawan b Mehidy 7 (17b, 1x4), Virat Kohli c Litton b Shakib 9 (15b, 1x4), Shreyas Iyer c Mushfiqur b Ebadot 24 (39b, 2x4), K.L. Rahul c Anamul b Ebadot 73 (70b, 5x4, 4x6), Washington Sundar c Ebadot b Shakib 19 (43b), Shahbaz Ahmed c Shakib b Ebadot 0 (4b), Shardul Thakur b Shakib 2 (3b), Deepak Chahar lbw b Shakib 0 (3b), Mohammed Siraj c Mahmudullah b Ebadot 9 (20b, 1x4), Kuldeep Sen (not out) 2 (4b); Extras (lb-1, w-12, nb-1): 14; Total (in 41.2 overs): 186.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-23 (Dhawan, 5.2 overs), 2-48 (Rohit, 10.2), 3-49 (Kohli, 10.4), 4-92 (Shreyas, 19.6), 5-152 (Washington, 32.3), 6-153 (Shahbaz, 33.2), 7-156 (Shardul, 34.1), 8-156 (Chahar, 34.4), 9-178 (Rahul, 39.5).

BANGLADESH BOWLING
Mustafizur 7-1-19-0, Mahmud 7-1-40-0, Mehidy 9-1-43-1, Shakib 10-2-36-5, Ebadot 8.2-0-47-4.

BANGLADESH
Najmul Hossain Shanto c Rohit b Chahar 0 (1b), Litton Das c Rahul b Washington 41 (63b, 3x4, 1x6), Anamul Haque c Washington b Siraj 14 (29b, 2x4), Shakib Al Hasan c Kohli b Washington 29 (38b, 3x4), Mushfiqur Rahim b Siraj 18 (45b), Mahmudullah lbw b Shardul 14 (35b), Afif Hossain c Siraj b Kuldeep Sen 6 (12b), Mehidy Hasan Miraz (not out) 38 (39b, 4x4, 2x6), Ebadot Hossain hit wicket b Kuldeep Sen 0 (3b), Hasan Mahmud lbw b Siraj 0 (2b), Mustafizur Rahman (not out) 10 (11b, 2x4); Extras (b-8, lb-1, w-6, nb-2): 17; Total (for nine wkts. in 46 overs): 187.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Shanto, 0.1), 2-26 (Anamul, 9.1), 3-74 (Litton, 19.2), 4-95 (Shakib, 23.3), 5-128 (Mahmudullah, 34.6), 6-128 (Mushfiqur, 35.1), 7-134 (Afif, 38.2), 8-135 (Ebadot, 38.5), 9-136 (Mahmud, 39.3).

INDIA BOWLING
Chahar 8-1-32-1, Siraj 10-1-32-3, Kuldeep Sen 5-0-37-2, Shahbaz 9-0-39-0, Washington 5-0-17-2, Shardul 9-1-21-1.

Toss: Bangladesh; **MoM:** Mehidy.
Bangladesh won by one wicket with four overs remaining to take a 1-0 lead in three-match series.
Second ODI: December 7, Mirpur, 11.30 a.m. IST.

Queen Envied claims Golconda 1000 Guineas

HYDERABAD: Trainer Irfan Ghatala's Queen Envied ridden by Antony Raj S won the Golconda 1000 Guineas, the first classic race of the Hyderabad Winter Season, held here on Sunday (Dec. 4).

The winner is owned by M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP & Sans Craintes Stud Farm Pvt. Ltd.

Jockey Antony Raj kept this daughter of Lord Admiral – Be Envied, last throughout the race till the home straight. Later she came with gigantic strides to beat her rivals in a close finish.

1. HARIDWAR PLATE (2,000m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **N R I SUPERPOWER** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Yesterday (Surya Prakash) 2, Just Incredible (Aneel) 3 and Dream Station (Abhay Singh) 4. 1/2, Shd and 4-1/4. 2m 8. 01s. ₹15 (w), 11, 10 and 30 (p). SHP: 40, THP: 34, SHW: 14 and 28, FP: 60, Q: 47, Tanala: 593. Favourite: N R I Superpower.

Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

2. ZURBARAN PLATE (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only (Cat. II): **CALISTA GIRL** (B. Nikhil) 1, Windsor (Akshay Kumar) 2, Lucky Zone (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 3 and That's My Love (Mohit Singh) 4. Not run: Shadow Of The Moon. 3/4, 1/2 and 4-1/4. 1m 12. 89s. ₹91 (w), 24, 12 and 10 (p). SHP: 35, THP: 40, SHW: 62 and 11, FP: 367, Q: 76, Tanala: 997. Favourite: Windsor.

Finishing on top: Queen Envied, winner of the Golconda 1000 Guineas, being led in by S.S.F. Hussain officiating for Trainer Irfan Ghatala, jockey S. Anthony Raj (up) and owners Arun Alagappan and Pranav Alagappan in Hyderabad on Sunday. G. RAMAKRISHNA

Owners: Kunwar Digvijay Singh Shekhawat & Mr. Sreeramulu Bommishetty. Trainer: N. Ravinder Singh.

3. K.R. ARVIND REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **AYR** (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Kancha (Akshay Kumar) 2, Nugget (Chouhan) 3 and Malaala (D.S. Deora) 4. Not run: Hard To Toss and Costello. Nk, Nk and 2. 1m 11. 88s. ₹50, 14, 10 and 15 (p). SHP: 36, THP: 71, SHW: 38 and 10, FP: 193, Q: 75, Tanala: 320. Favourite: Nugget.

Owners: Mrs. Rajini Meka, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epur and Mr. Ayyadevara Srinivas. Trainer: L.D' Silva.

4. ARDENT KNIGHT PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **BARBET** (B. Nikhil) 1, Thanks (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 2, Silk (Koushik) 3 and Siri (Md. Ismail) 4. 2-1/2, 2-1/2 and 1-1/4. 1m 12. 33s. ₹17 (w), 10, 14 and 41 (p). SHP: 25, THP: 62, SHW: 16 and 23, FP: 39, Q: 29, Tanala: 396. Favourite: Barbet.

Owners: Mr. K.N. Dhunjibhoy and Mr. Z.K. Dhunjibhoy rep. Five Stars Shipping Co. Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

5. DODLA PRATAP CHANDER REDDY MEMORIAL MILLION (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 2-y-o only: **SHE CAN** (Akshay Kumar) 1, High Command (P.S. Chouhan) 2, Rising Tycoon (Antony Raj) 3 and Commanding Knight (Santosh Raj) 4. 2-1/4, 3-1/4 and 2. 1m 11. 96s. ₹26 (w), 18, 12 and 11 (p). SHP: 30, THP: 42, SHW: 21 and 11, FP: 105, Q: 50, Tanala: 279. Favourite: She Can.

Owners: Mr. Chitturi Krishna Kannaiah, Mr. Soma Raju Adipudi, Mr. Sureshbabu Daggubati and Mr. Venkatesh Daggubati. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

6. AIR COMMAND CUP (1,600m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **HOPING CLOUD** (Mohit Singh) 1, Starwalt (Chouhan) 2, City Cruise (R.S. Jodha) 3 and Bangor On Dee (Afroz Khan) 4. 6-1/4, 4-1/4 and 4-1/2. 1m 39. 08s. ₹20 (w), 12, 14 and 17 (p). SHP: 30, THP: 46, SHW: 15 and 21, FP: 49, Q: 26, Tanala: 314. Favourite: Hoping Cloud.

Owner: Mr. Deepak Choudhary. Trainer: Jasbir Singh.

7. GOLCONDA 1000 GUINEAS (Gr. 2) (1,600m), (Terms) Fillies, 3-y-o only: **QUEEN ENVIED** (Lord Admiral - Be Envied) (Antony Raj S) 1, Tiger Mountain (Top Class – Star Mountain) (Suraj Narredu) 2, Artemis Ignacia (Excellent Art – Windsor Manor) (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and Ballerina (Sanus Per Aquam – Belladee) (Mukesh Kumar) 4. Nk, Sh and Hd. 1m 38. 87s. ₹30 (w), 18 and 26 (p). SHP: 37, THP: 60, SHW: 16 and 30, FP: 198, Q: 87, Tanala: 316. Favourite: Artemis Ignacia.

Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP & Sans Craintes Stud Farm Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

8. ARDENT KNIGHT PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **BELLAGIO** (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Crimson Rose (Akshay Kumar) 2, Burgundy Black (D.S. Deora) 3 and Divine Connection (R.S. Jodha) 4. Hd, 2-3/4 and 3/4. 1m 13. 42s. ₹53 (w), 11, 10 and 50 (p). SHP: 35, THP: 133, SHW: 22 and 11, FP: 127, Q: 27, Tanala: 1,170. Favourite: Crimson Rose.

Owner: Mr. M. Ramakrishna Reddy, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epur and Mrs. Marietta Frances Gorethi Beard. Trainer: L.D' Silva.

Jackpot: 70%: ₹7,557 (23 tkts.), 30%: 471 (158 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 5,160 (6 tkts.), (ii) 1,659 (38 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 2,391 (14 tkts.), (ii)n 253 (81 tkts.), (iii) 542 (66 tkts.).

Briar Ridge should make amends in feature event

HYDERABAD: Trainer Prasad Raju's Briar Ridge, who ran second in his last start, should make amends in the upper division of the Mica Empress Plate, the chief event of Monday's (Dec. 5) races.

1 MEDARAM PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III) – 12.40 p.m.: 1. Aiza (8) Aneel 60, 2. Ayur Tej (1) Rafique Sk. 60, 3. Fatuma (4) P. Ajeeth Kumar 60, 4. Inside Story (3) R.S. Jodha 60, 5. Dream Jewel (5) B. Nikhil 57.5, 6. Glimmer Of Hope (6) Gaurav Singh 57.5, 7. Sweet Melody (2) Afroz Khan 57 and 8. Lifetime (7) Surya Prakash 53.

1. AIZA, 2. FATUMA, 3. LIFETIME

2 BASARA PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 1.10: 1. Wind Sprite (8) Afroz Khan 60, 2. Precious Gift (9) Santosh Raj 56, 3. Eastern Blaze (1) Gaurav Singh 54.5, 4. Flaming Falcon (2) B. Nikhil 54.5, 5. Undaunted (5) Rafique Sk. 54.5, 6. N R I Fantasy (7) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 7. Picture Me (3) P. Ajeeth Kumar 53, 8. Shazia (4) D.S. Deora 53 and 9. Pancho (6) Akshay Kumar 52.5.

1. PRECIOUS GIFT, 2. PANCHO, 3. N R I FANTASY

3 FLORINA PLATE (1,600m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – - 1.40: 1. Path Of Peace (2) Afroz Khan 60, 2. Ivanhoe (7) Surya Prakash 59.5, 3. Resurgence (4) P. Ajeeth Kumar 56, 4. Protocol (1) Md. Ismail 55.5, 5. Exclusive Luck (3) Mohit Singh 55, 6. Role Model (5) Gaurav Singh 54 and 7. Black Opal (6) Santosh Raj 52.5.

1. IVANHOE, 2. PROTOCOL, 3. RESURGENCE

4 BONZER PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III) – 2.10: 1. First Apostle (4) Rafique Sk. 60, 2. Lights On (3) R.S. Jodha 60, 3. Malahat (8) D.S. Deora 60, 4. My Grandeur (11) P. Ajeeth Kumar 60, 5. My Way Or Highway (6) Mohit Singh 59.5, 6. Ikra (9) Aneel 59, 7. Saint Emilion (7) Gaurav Singh 59, 8. Silver Lining (1) B.R. Kumar 59, 9. Good Tidings (10) Akshay Kumar 56.5, 10. First In Line (2) Surya Prakash 55.5, 11. Space Time (5) B. Nikhil 55 and 12. Ar Superior (12) G. Naresh 52.5.

1. GOOD TIDINGS, 2. SILVER LINING, 3. AR SUPERIOR

4 MICA EMPRESS PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 64 (Cat. II) – 2.45: 1. Lifes Song (5) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Miss Little Angel (8) B.R. Kumar 56, 3. Unsung Hero (4) Rafique Sk. 55.5, 4. Briar Ridge (3) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 5. Star Racer (2) Aneel 53.5, 6. Mind Reader (1) R.S. Jodha 52, 7. All Time Legend (6) D.S. Deora 51.5, 8. Angelita (7) P. Ajeeth Kumar 51 and 9. Angel Tesoro (9) Afroz Khan 50.5.

1. BRIAR RIDGE, 2. LIFES SONG, 3. MISS LITTLE ANGEL

5 BASARA PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 3.15: 1. Avancia (3) Suraj Narredu 60, 2. My Master (6) Gaurav Singh 56.5, 3. Double Bonanza (5) Surya Prakash 55.5, 4. Milton Keynes (9) B.R. Kumar 55.5, 5. Urgent (8) Akshay Kumar 55.5, 6. Stoic Hero (2) Aneel 54.5, 7. Creative Art (7) Santosh Raj 54, 8. Stay Smart (4) B. Nikhil 54 and 9. Delhi Heights (1) D.S. Deora 53.5.

1. AVANCIA, 2. URGENT, 3. MY MASTER

6 MICA EMPRESS PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 – 3.45: 1. City Of Bliss (2) B.R. Kumar 60, 2. N R I Vision (6) G. Naresh 58.5, 3. Bugsy (3) P. Ajeeth Kumar 57.5, 4. Maximum Glamour (5) Suraj Narredu 56.5, 5. Ambitious Star (8) Afroz Khan 55, 6. Top Diamond (4) D.S. Deora 55, 7. General Atlantic (1) Gaurav Singh 54 and 8. Aerial Combat (7) Surya Prakash 53.5.

1. MAXIMUM GLAMOUR, 2. AMBITIOUS STAR, 3. TOP DIAMOND

7 TINTINNABULATION PLATE (1,400m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 – 4.15: 1. Char Ek Char (4) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Despang (8) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Unmatched (2) B.R. Kumar 59, 4. Mireya (11) A.A. Vikrant 57, 5. Indian Prince (14) Md. Ismail 56.5, 6. Royal Star (13) Afroz Khan 55.5, 7. Vision Of Rose (7) Koushik 55, 8. Ice Berry (3) Aneel 54.5, 9. Coming Home (6) D.S. Deora 54, 10. Salisbury (1) Santosh Raj 54, 11. Cash Register (12) Mohit Singh 53.5, 12. Sucker Punch (9) B. Nikhil 53.5, 13. Sundance Kid (10) Abhay Singh 52.5 and 14. Exponent (5) Gaurav Singh 51.5.

1. CHAR EK CHAR, 2. UNMATCHED, 3. DESPANG

8 BONZER PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III) – 4.45: 1. Kachnar (7) Abhay Singh 60, 2. Sport On Fire (8) Rafique Sk. 60, 3. Voice Of A Dream (6) P. Ajeeth Kumar 60, 4. Canterbury (10) Afroz Khan 59.5, 5. Deccan Ranger (2) Santosh Raj 59, 6. Mountain Rose (4) G. Naresh 59, 7. Raniji (3) R.S. Jodha 59, 8. Ella Eldingar (11) Aneel 58.5, 9. Choice Of Diamond (9) A.A. Vikrant 57.5, 10. Sound Echo (5) D.S. Deora 56.5, 11. It's My Life (1) B. Nikhil 53.

1. VOICE OF A DREAM, 2. KACHNAR, 3. CANTERBURY

Day's Best: **GOOD TIDINGS**

Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3, 4 5. (ii) 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9. Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4, & 5. (ii) 6, 7, 8 & 9. Treble : (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 4, 5 & 6, (iii) 7, 8 & 9.

Tanala : All races.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Young champs: The BFC team that won the u-11 title at the KSFA Youth Premier League.

BFC wins u-11 title

JSW BFC edged Kickstart FC 4-3 to win the under-11 title at the KSFA Youth Premier League on Sunday.

Other results: U-15: IFEA bt Sportshood 12-1; MVFA bt Nakshatra FA 6-0; Play Smart FA bt BSSSS 4-1.

U-13: MVFA bt Nakshatra FA 1-0; YBEFA bt Samurai Bangalore 5-0; Titan bt Sportshood 2-0.

U-9: Alchemy International bt Conscient FA 8-3; Vickey FA bt MVFA 2-1.

Prakar scores century for Karnataka

A well-compiled 149 (214b, 23x4) by middle order batsman Prakar Chaturvedi helped Karnataka post a first innings total of 380 against Jammu & Kashmir on the second day of the Cooch Behar Trophy under-19 match in Mysuru on Sunday. At close, J & K was 84 for three in 23 overs in its second innings.

The scores: J & K 86 in 49.3 overs & 84/3 in 23 overs (Arya Thakar 42, Arnav Gupta 29 n.o.) vs Karnataka 380 in 105 overs (Prakar Chaturvedi 149, Swaroop S. Hipparagi 71, Yashovardhan Parantap 41, Vijayaraj 36, Hardik Raj 27 n.o., Mousub Mohd. Bhat 6/73, Urooj Pervaiz 3/74).

Pavan scores hat-trick

Pavan scored a hat-trick as BCYA-A thrashed Aristocrat 10-2 in the KSHA B-division hockey league on Sunday.

The result:

BCYA-A 10 (Govind Nag 11, 29, Sandeep 19, 35, Pavan 31, Tejas Chavan 28, 39, C. Yuvaraj 36, 49, Manpreet Singh 42) bt Aristocrat HC 2 (R. Cariappa 9, Len 13); Bellary HC 6 (Kushal 7, 9, Abhishek 17, Lokesh 20, Bharath 35, Chandra Mouli 38) bt Dhyanchand HC, Tumkur 0; Flying HC 4 (Rexin Kinsey 13, John Bosco 23, M. Nitin 34, Govindraj 47) bt Primrose HC 1 (Diwakar 15).

Sunil triumphs

S. Sunil, with 277 gross, emerged the open category event winner (72 holes) at the MP Davis Gold Cup golf tournament at the Bangalore Golf Club on Sunday.

Other results (winners all): Handicap: 72 holes: B.K. Prabhakar (276 Nett); **36 holes (0-9):** Syed Arifulla (137 Nett); **36 holes (19-24):** G.N. Somashekar (131 Nett); **Ladies gross, 36 holes:** Saanvi Somu (146 gross); **Ladies handicap: 36 holes (0-16):** Lata Shivanna (136 Nett); **36 holes (17-24):** Sangeeta Kamath (132 Nett).

Durganshi clinches girls' title

Sports Bureau

India's Durganshi Kumar defeated compatriot Sreenidhi Balaji 6-4, 7-6(0) in the girls' final of the ITF grade-5 junior tennis tournament in Pokhara, Nepal.

The doubles titles were swept by Sagar Kumar & Swastik Sharma and Sreenidhi & Laxmisiri Dandu.

The results: Boys, semifinals: Ke Hau Hung (Tpe) bt Smit Patel 6-1, 6-1; **Doubles, final:** Sagar Kumar & Swastik Sharma w/o Euom Dong Hyeon (Kor) & K. Karunagaren (Mas).

Girls, final: Durganshi Kumar bt Sreenidhi Balaji 6-4, 7-6(0); **Doubles, final:** Sreenidhi & Laxmisiri Dandu bt Kkaira Chetnani & Durganshi 6-2, 6-2.